

ALI-THE MAN

(in two Books)

*Being a study of the Life and Times
of Ali, The Prophet's Successor,
Son-in-law and cousin,
with a survey of
socio-political
tendencies
of the
age.*

BOOK I.

*From the earliest time upto the selection of
'Uthman for the Caliphate.*

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Ali/Ham

BY

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BATALA, (Punjab, India.)

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TO

*Farzand-i-Dilpizir-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia,
Mukhlis-ud-Doulah, Nasir-ul-Mulk,
Amir-ul-Umara, Captain,*

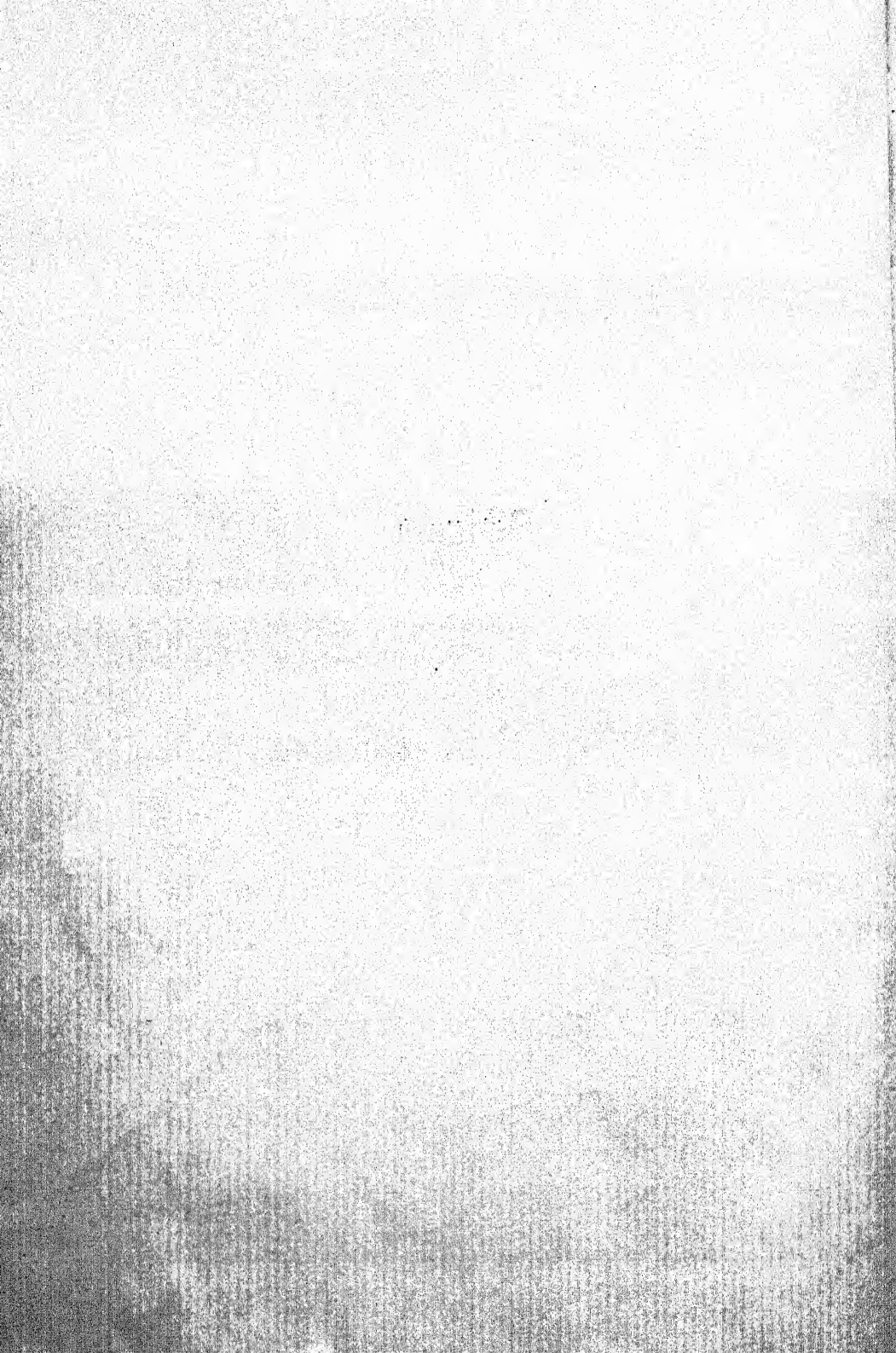
His Highness, Nawwab,

Sayyed Raza Ali Khan Bahadur

RULER

OF

RAMPUR.



P R E F A C E .

There is discernible, in Man's history, a continuous line of intellectual progress. Out of plural gods emerges the One God of the Old Testament but personal, tribal: God of Abraham, Moses or of Israel. Later, He appears as *our* Father, though the confinement of Jesus' Mission to the Israelites restricted the pronoun to that people; and Man continued to be Roman or Barbarian, Jew or Gentile, 'Arab or 'Ajem. Mohammed taught that He was the Lord of the Universe and (therefore) mankind one brotherhood. Tribalism, insular, exclusive and parochial, isolated by family bounds and geographical boundaries, perpetually fighting its neighbour, always expecting the Deity's help in its fights, found fraternising with foreigners strange, and Jehovah, claiming Israel's worship, free to side with the enemy incomprehensible. The dual idea freed God from family bounds and tribal associations and, wiping off parochialism, universalised Man. For grasping it was needed a mental effort hitherto unknown. Abolishing Prophethood Mohammed snapped Man's mental leading-strings and emancipated his mind. Instead of Commandments he gave Man the Book of Reason or Clarification (*Tubiyān*), inviting him to study Nature, the Law of Life, the rise and fall of nations and to strive for the Ultimate Good. It was the longest leap in Man's intellectual annals, and it took Mohammed's people victorious over the lands of the Chosros and Cæsors. In gratitude, they began adoring the cause of their sudden rise instead of unravelling and living upto the Book of Reason. And they fell. One of the four Imāms-Mālik or Ahmed—I write from memory—early in the second century of the Hijra, refused to eat a water-melon, as the Reports were silent as to whether the Prophet had cut it longitudinally or

latitudinally, blind to the fact that the eating of the fruit (which the Prophet had done) was more important than the cutting. The mentality may be traced back to the second decade after the Prophet. Ali was offered the Caliphate if he would follow the Book, the *Sunneh* and the precedents of the first two Caliphs. He promised to follow (the spirit of) the first two items according to his lights and on his refusing to fetter his judgment by promising more, the proposer passed on the office to the consenting 'Uthmán... A prophet, to my mind, is not a *accident* but a *plan*, not a *incident* but a *movement*, not a mere *remedy* but an *impetus*. The Prophet based Society on Reason; Ali is his spiritual successor, a continuation of Mohammed's *plan*, *movement* and *impetus*... Society is apt to swallow the *individual*, to insist on his thinking and living on a pattern. Ali worked, in the interest of larger values, with men he differed from, and tolerated those who dissented from him. For all those, therefore, who long to see Society based on Reason and Intellect Ali's life is a fruitful study; for all those who long for the emancipation of the *individual* in a well-ordered Society Ali's life-story is a rich lesson.

The English knowing public has been without a detailed sketch of the hero of Islam, "the first Muslim", "the foremost among Muslims" who, according to Avicenna, was "in essence, akin to Prophethood." The Mother of the Faithful, 'Āyeshah, and Mu'āwiyah called him "the guardian of Arabia" and the "custodian of Law and Knowledge". The Grand-Master of the Sūfis, Ali has been deified by the Nuseiries. Royal and knightly swords bear his name for ornament and effective striking. The soldier, sportsman and athlete shout his name and so does the wrestler who salutes the ground under Ali's feet, before entering the arena. The poet, the peakers

and the orator seek inspiration from him, the mother uses his name as an amulet for her pets. In fight and fear his name is protection and refuge. The beggar sings of him to stimulate the hearer's charity. Two names are the most popular to name the children after, the Prophet's and Ali's. Said of him the late Sayyad Amir Ali (P. C.), "Seven centuries before, this wonderful man would have been apotheosised, thirteen centuries later, his genius and talents, his virtues and his valour would have extorted the admiration of the civilised world." And admiration has not been stinted by the West. Sedilott appreciated his "glory so pure and grand". "One can not," wrote Carlyle, "but like him, a noble-minded creature.. full of affection, of fiery daring... brave as a lion, yet with a grace, a truth and affection worthy of Christian knighthood". "The truest-hearted and the best of Muslims" is Major Osborne's estimate. One French writer styles him, "the hope of Islam" and another opines that Ali could have brought about "the realisation of the Prophet's teachings in the actual amalgamation of Reason with Law and the impersonation of the first principles of true philosophy in positive action".

The vastness and variety of the subject shall await the application of a richer mind and abler pen. Mine is the humbler task of a road-maker to prepare the path for the advent of master-writers. The topics, for instance, of the Caliphate and Khárijí movement can absorb more research and study on the lines I have ventured to take, in order to rightly estimate Ali's contribution to the world's well-being and advancement. Muslim literature was created under the Umeyyádes and Abbásides. The one openly hostile to Ali cursed him from the pulpit. The other had cause to suppress his

virtues. Much was, therefore, 'made to order' in the literature. It is, nevertheless, possible to unearth the truth from under the *debris*.

I have, now, to confess that the compilation has all the shortcomings inseparable from the maiden work of an amateur writing at long intervals, during odd half-hours snatched from professional work, burning midnight oil in a not very well-equipped library and without the benefit of expert advice. And the same is my defence. The proof-reading, too, could have been better—my inexperience again. The learned reader will, I hope, see that I have done my best, under the circumstances to make the volume as readable and interesting as I could.

To make it handy, the work is split up in two volumes. The second volume covers the period onwards, up to the end of Ali's rule. It is in press and is expected to be ready shortly. If life and leisure permit I intend collecting Ali's teachings in a separate volume. But destiny rules the affairs of men.

Besides the writers I have benefited from, I am particularly grateful to Sayyed Riáz Ali Sahib whose learned book, *el Kerrár*, (in Urdu), enabled me to understand and admire Ali. His book is, as it were, the mother of this one.

I shall be glad to consider any criticism *addressed to me*, if found useful, I shall make improvements in the next edition.

THE AUTHOR.

Note:—

Proper nouns are spelt to accord with Arab phonetics. (th) represents a ث, (gh) and (kh) a غ and خ. A comma at the head indicates a (z). A *fet-ha* is ordinarily written as (e), (a) gives an ordinary i, a short stroke at the top gives long sound to a letter. (k) indicates a ك and (Q) a ق.

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ERRATA.

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3	or	"	on
2	healthy	"	healdy
28	vicegerent	"	viceregent
8	refugees	"	refugess
19	the	"	they
15	'Amr who	"	'Amr was
16	atmosphere	"	atmoshere
17)	Abi Selúl	"	Ubeiyyee
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28	to be	"	to
12	challenge	"	challedge
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1	Sunho	"	suns
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2	was	"	were
6	none	"	non
22	massacre	"	massarae
5	jointly	"	jointy
28	grandson	"	grandon
9	they	"	it
18	revert	"	revent.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SON OF THE KABEH.

Locality—sanctity—antiquity—importance of the Kabeh—Ali's birth-place.

1. In the midst of a stony, sun-burnt strip of land, “the valley unvegetating” of sandy Arabia, there stands a small, unpretentious stone structure. This is the Kabeh, the sacred mosque to which one-fourth of the human race professing Islam turns five times daily at prayer-time. Every Muslim of means is expected to visit it, walk round it and run about its vicinity and up and down the surrounding hills, in memory of the great historical events of which it has been the scene and place of occurrence. Under its roof is the sacred Black Stone which every Pilgrim is proud to kiss with his devotional lips.

2. At Divine Command Abraham and his son Ishmael hewed and shaped the stones, and with Apostolic hands of the two holy masons the Kabeh was raised, on foundations yet more ancient, to be the House of Worship for all futurity. Ever since then it

has been the centre of devotion and the resort of Pilgrims from all corners of the Arabian Peninsula. To accommodate these Pilgrims, to supply their mundane needs the town of Meccah arose and developed round it. Houses, bazars and markets came into existence. For the safety of the large pilgrim traffic, the peace of the "month of the Pilgrimage" was held inviolable; turbulent Arabia enjoyed for the period perfect peace.

3. Coveted market for the shrewd trader, oratorium of national poetry and eloquence, Olympia for the display of athletics, horsemanship and the skill of the warrior, inter-tribal Beauty Exhibition for the fair sex, *rendezvous* of parted lovers and a vast opportunity for forming new attachments, Meccah, or more properly the Kabeh, was, in one word, the centre of all human activities of the Arabic-speaking people. The "Keeper of the Kabeh" enjoyed a spiritual overlordship over its votaries in days when the spiritual dominated all other departments of life.

4. Dedicated by the Father of Semitic history to the worship of the one true God, the Kabeh has seen many a rise and fall of human intellect, many a glorious dawn of religious light and ignominious gloom of base superstition. At the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian era, the Kabeh covered under its roof stone-gods to the number of 360 — emblematic of Arabia's intellectual degradation. Each of these gods was independent of the other, each was as efficacious as any other. Every tribe had its own deity perched up somewhere in the national Pantheon. With the exception of a few noble souls, the Arab had completely run away from his God.

5. In the 30th year of the era of the Elephant^a (603. A. D.) Fátiméh, the noble daughter of Asad bin Háshim and the consort of Abú Tálíb, the Sheikh of Meccah, stands praying before the Kabeh. Suddenly she feels the pangs of travail. As tradition has it, a wall of the Kabeh parts asunder, the lady enters the house and the opening closes up behind her. The expectant mother delivers herself of a baby-boy. This boy of "Divinely dignified countenance^b," born under the shadow of 360 stone-gods, whose words of strong monotheistic conviction—"parting of the veils (of Mystery) would not add to my Belief (in the Divine Being's Unity)"—lie embalmed in the pages of Theistic history, the only one^c to take his birth in the Kabeh, is the subject of this work.

(a) Ch. 3. P.-7

(b) "Karram Allah Wajehu", said the Prophet, of Alí. Muslims to this day proudly affix the phrase to Alí's name, because he had never bowed his head before idols.

(c) Masúdí.

CHAPTER II CHRISTENING.

The baby at home—the parents name him Zeid and Heider—the baby and Muhammad who names him 'Ali—'Ali's first glance, suck and bath—a prophecy.

1. The mother, happy at the new birth and proud of the unique honour of being the mother of the "Son of the Kabeh", brought the baby from the House Named. of God to her husband's. Abú Tálíb lovingly took the baby in his arms and found it stronger and sturdier than the ordinary. Getting his cheeks scratched by the tiny nails of the new-born, the brave old Patriarch joyously remarked to his noble consort,

"Daughter of Asad, it is a lion-clawed baby".

"Yes," said the mother. "I have, therefore, named him Asad (lion), after my father".

Abú Tálíb named him Zeid. According to another tradition the boy's mother named him Heider.^a

2. Now, a tall handsome youth of serene countenance and profoundly thoughtful brow walks briskly towards the baby's home. This is el Amín^b (the Trusty). First meeting.

Something in the new-born seems to have attracted him from the great thoughts he is perpetually thinking, something great seems to be drawing him on to the tiny personality of the baby. He enters the house. The happy mother, happier at the talk she had been having with her consort, warns him.

(a) Literally, "Serpent-Killer". *Ref.* 'Ali's war-song at Kheiber, 'I am the one whose mother named him Heider', Vide Ch. 19. P. 24.

(b) Before his "Call" to the Apostolate Mohammad's contemporaries, on account of his scrupulous honesty, used to call him el Amín, the Trusty.

"It is lion-clawed, it will scratch your face."

Mohammed smiles his sweet smile and says, "No auntie, he shall not scratch my face."

Taking up the baby in his loving arms he asks the name.

"I have named him Asad and your uncle has named him Zeid," replies the aunt.

"I name him 'Ali", says Mohammad.

And 'Ali is the name by which he is known to the world.

3. The baby has kept his eyes closed and opens them only in Muhammad's arms. The two look at each other; Muhammad smiles and 'Ali receives the smile in serenity. Mohammed, the Trusty, places his truthful tongue in the baby's mouth. This is the first nourishment that 'Ali sucked.

4. Mohammed orders for water and with his own honest hands gives the baby its first bath. In the pleasant engagement his smiling face suddenly saddens. "Just as I am giving him his first bath today", says Mohammed, "some day he will be giving me my last bath." Let us see, later, how the prophecy is fulfilled.

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT.

The Hemites—The Shemites (Qehtānites of Yemen, Jurehemites and Ishmaelites)—Abraham and Ishmael build the Kabeh—Ishmael marries the Jurhemite's daughter—the Kabeh and Jurhemites—Adnān regains the Kabeh—Mād—Tīhr or Qureish—Quseiy overwhelms the Beni Khuzá—replans and organises Meccah and the Qureish—Abd ud Dar—Háshim—Muttalib—Abdul Muttalib—the Zemzem and family disputes—Abreheh, of the Elephant—Abdulleh marries Eimineh—Meccan polity—Mohammad's birth—Abdul Muttalib's prerogatives—Mohammad entrusted to Abu Tálīb—Abú Tálīb succeeds his father.

1. The Hemites were the earliest to people Arabia after the Deluge. Divine wrath overwhelmed them.
Hemites. Nothing remains of them but a mention of three of their tribes, the Bení 'Aad, 'Amáliqueh and Themúd. These are the 'Arab-ul-Báiyideh.

2. The present population is Semitic, consisting of the original and the naturalised Arabs—'Áribeh or Shemites. Mutáribeh and the Mustárebeh. Yárib, one of the sons of Qehtán or Joctan, fourth in descent from Shem, son of Noah, is the progenitor of the virile stock of the 'Áribeh Arabs who also gave his name to the country. Yarib's grandson the famous Abd-ush-Shams, surnamed Sebá—the victorious, the capturer—was the father of the Himyár, red, on account of his red mantle, like that of the Pharaohs. His and his brother, Kuhlání's descendants ruled Yemen shortly before Mohammad. Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, of Solomon's time, was of this dynasty. About the time of the Ishmaelites' settlement, the Bení Jurehem drove out the 'Amáliqueh from the Hijáz and joining rule with the

guardianship of the Kabeh assumed the title of Melik or King. The Bení Khuzá, a Qehtánite clan, in the first century B. C. replaced the Jurhemites and ruled the land for about two centuries.

3. From Chaldeoay Abraham and his son Ishmael came to Meccah and founded the Kabeh. The Jurhemite chief Meghás bin 'Amr married his daughter to Ishmael and founded the city of Meccah. The Ishmaelites continued to be the guardians of the Temple till they fled before the Babylonian invader, Nebuchadnezzar. In the first century B. C. 'Adnán, an Ishmaelite, resettled in Meccah and married the Jurhemite chief's daughter. His son Maád is the progenitor of the Ishmaelites of the Hijáz. His son, Fihr, surnamed Qureish, who flourished in the third century B. C. is the ancestor of the Qureish tribe. Fihr's descendent, Quseiy, succeeded his father-in-law, HolyI who was thus the last of the Khuzá.'

4. Quseiy's rise seems to have been in the middle of the fifth century of the Christian era. In possession of secular and spiritual powers, he set himself to reorganisation. Extreme veneration for the Kabeh had kept the Qureish from building except at a respectful distance from it. This led to their mutual isolation and weak dispersal. Marking down a spacious enclosure round the Kabeh, for circumambulation, Quseiy allotted to the Qureish families land to build houses upon according to a set scheme of fortification. This brought compact strength to the Qureish, walled in the Kabeh against disrespectful intrusion and protected it against attack with live lines of the Qureish houses.

Quseiy built for himself a palace with the door opening on the platform of the national Temple. In this palace, called the "Dár un Nudwa, the council-hall, public affairs were discussed under his presidency. He conferred military commands by attaching to the end of a lance a piece of cloth. This ceremony, the *Aqd ul Liwa*, continued thenceforward to the end of the Arab Empire. The nation always marched under Quseiy's flag. Being the custodian of the House of God, he was the host of its pilgrims, therefore, to feed the poorer of these, he imposed an annual poor-tax called the *Rifáda*. Thus the *Nudwa*, the *Liwa* and the *Rifáda*, signifying the right of convoking and presiding over the national council, the bestowing of the Standard under which the nation marched and levying taxes, together with *Siqáiyeh*, the control of the water-supply of Mecca and its neighbourhood, symbolized his civil authority. He held in his hands the keys of the *Kabeh* which signified that he was the chief priest and custodian of national worship. Quseiy, thus, "united in his person all the principal religious, civil, and political functions. He was king, magistrate, and chief pontiff. His power which was almost royal, threw great lustre on the tribe of Qureish of whom he was the acknowledged chief, and from this time the Qureish acquired a marked preponderance among the other descendants of Ishmael".^a

5. Quseiy, (dying about 480 A. D.) nominated his eldest son *Abd-ul-Dár* as his successor. After *Abd-ul-Háshim*. *Dár* a dispute arose in the family. Various clans and their allies prepared for a war of succession which was avoided by intrusting *Rifáda* and

(a) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

Siqáiyeh to Abd-ush-Shams bin Abd Menáf, and Hijábeh, Nudwa and Liwa to the children of Abd-ud-Dár. Abd-ush-Shams not being in very affluent circumstances transferred the charge to his brother Háshim (a rich man of great consequence) who, joining his own resources to the income from the Rifáda, munificently entertained strangers and pilgrims who flocked to the Kabeh every year. Háshim was a great benefactor of the Qureish in as much as it was he, who was instrumental in removing poverty from them by arranging to send out, annually, two caravans, one in winter to Yemen, the other in summer to Syria. Háshim died about 510 A.D. during one of his commercial expeditions, in Ghazza (in Syria). He left an only son Sheibeh, by Selma, a Yetheribite lady.

6. On Háshim's death, his younger brother Muttalib, whose worth and munificence earned from his compatriots the noble designation of el-Faiz, Muttalib. the generous, succeeded him to the charge of Rifádah and Siqáiyeh. Muttalib brought Sheibeh (the white haired youth) from Yetherib to Mecca. Sheibeh had never before been seen in Mecca and when he was brought, after his long stay with his mother, the Meccans mistaking him for his uncle's slave called him Abd-ul-Muttalib (the slave of Muttalib).

7. Sheibeh had lived among his mother's people, the Beni Nejjár, till his seventh year. A Meccan wayfarer saw in Yetherib an extremely fair and muscular child playing among his playmates. He stopped to watch the attractive lad who suddenly stood apart, drew himself up in childish superiority and addressed his fellows. "I am

Sheibeh or
Abdul
Muttalib.

the child of Zemzem^b. I am the son of Sefác. I am the offspring of the great Háshim. And the distinction is great for anybody". The wayfarer stepped forward and questioned the child. "But, uncle, who are you?" asked the child. "I am a Meccan wayfarer, little Sir, and I want to learn the details of your little eloquence". "Then", said the child, "go to Mecca and tell my uncles that in letting me be with my mother's people they are caring little for their good name". On his return, the Meccan related the indictment to Muttalib who at once sent for his steed and rushed to his nephew to say, "Here I am, my son, to take you to your father's people". The lad was glad but it was a grievous parting for the widow-mother. "Do you want to go, my darling," asked the mother. The darling casting down his eyes said, "just as you please, mother." "Go, my son", sobbed out the brave mother of the child who was to be one of the greatest and best remembered men of his country, "Go with your uncle, go to your father's people and your father's dignities and honours". "Good lady", said the generous Muttalib to the boy's mother, "We are grateful to you and we shall always remember you". Sheibeh came to Mecca and Sheibeh's grandson, Mohammed, was once more to come back to the hospitality of his grandmother's City. How the good lady's kinswomen sang their welcome to her descendant Mohammed^d and how they refused to be bribed^e against his cousin Alí is yet in the lap of the future.

(b) The sacred well of Mecca, still extant and dating back to Abraham.

(c) One of Mecca's sacred hills.

(d) Ch. 15. P. 1.

(e) Ch. 39. P. 3.

Muttalib dying at Qezwán (in Yemen) was succeeded by his nephew Abd-ul-Muttalib to the virtual headship of the Meccan commonwealth in 520 A. D. The chief, in persuance of a dream dug for the sacred well of Zemzem. As he dug for it the Qureish laughed at the wild-goose chase, but he persevered and at last traced the well to the water-level. The Jurhemites flying before the Beni Khuzá,^f had thrown the more valuable of the treasures of the Kabeh in the well, and filled it up traceless. During the excavation two gold gazelles, bedecked and bejewelled, some costly armours and a large number of swords were discovered. The Qureish claimed a share in the well as well as its treasure. Abd-ul-Muttalib resisted the claim because they had refused to help in the digging. The Qureish waived their claim in the well but insisted for a share in the find. The matter was referred to lots. The lot gave the gazelles to the Kabeh, the rest to the finder and nothing to the Qureish. Abd-ul-Muttalib placed the gazelles in the House of God, from where they were stolen by the envious Qureish^g. Abd-ul-Muttalib gifted Zemzem to the public.

During the discussion over the appropriation of the find, 'Adi bin Naufel, a Qureish, envious of Abd-ul-Muttalib's prestige taunted him that the latter was but a solitary man with a solitary son and no helpers, and that he being so scantily supported ought not to assume airs. The chief prayed for more sons and when their number reached ten, he decided to sacrifice one in the name of God. Lots indicated Abdulleh, the youngest and handsomest child for the altar. The poor mother of

(f) Ch. 3. P. 2.

(g) Abu Jihl or Abu Leheb.

the boy cried; her elder son, Abú Tálíb, requested to be taken in exchange for Abdulleh. The man in the chief felt weak but the voice of conscience and the memory of pledged word urged him to do what his ancestor Abraham^h had done earlier. The Beni Mekhzum, kinsmen of Abdulleh's mother, came with drawn swords, and demanded that either their kinswoman's son should be spared or all the sons should be sacrificed. Abd-ul-Muttalib was in a fix. Some one, at last, suggested that camels may be sacrificed instead. Lots were cast to find both the permissibility of the alternative and the value of the son; ten, twenty, fifty, and at last a hundred camels came out to be the alternative value. Abd-ul-Muttalib yet felt diffident. Thrice were the lots cast, a hundred camels against Abdulleh and thrice the award was a hundred camels instead of Abdulleh. Every body was glad and joyous. Abd-ul-Muttalib sacrificed a hundred camels to redeem his word pledged to the Lord.

Abreheh el Ashrem, the Abyssinian Viceroy of Yemen, built a grand cathedral at Saná as a rival to the Kabeh. Failing to attract Arab pilgrims and their offerings that were expected to repay the lavish expenditure on the new structure and failing in his design of thus destroying Mecca's prosperity and importance and winning Arabia to Christianity—his Faith and that of his employer, the Byzantine Empire—he was angry. The desecration of the cathedral by a Meccan furnished him with a pretence for personally leading an army against

(h) The Patriarch dreamt that he was sacrificing his son and in the morning prepared to actualize his dream. An opportune Revelation, however saved the son under the knife.

the City. The army contained an elephant corpse also. Arabs had never seen the animal before. These moving mountains of animal flesh struck the imagination of the highly impressionable Arabs, and they dated a new era from the event—the era of the Elephant (570 A. D.).

8. The Meccans, not knowing how to resist such an army, intended flight, but Abd-ul-Muttalib said to them, “it is a shame to desert the House of God. God of the Kabeh shall never let the enemy succeed against it. You also shall be safe if you remain in the House of Safety.” “The Qureish took to the neighbouring hills, but Abd-ul-Muttalib remained. “I cannot” said he, “bear the shame of deserting the House of God and the Temple of my Lord. I stay on here till God decides between me and the invader”.ⁱ

Abd-ul-Muttalib accordingly stayed on till the invaders entered the deserted city, took away the cattle and kine of the Qureish and also some eighty of his own camels.

Apprised of it, Abd-ul-Muttalib followed them to the enemy-camp, where he was ushered into the viceregal tent. Abreheh received him with warm courtesy, and asked the object of his visit. “I always keep some camels to feast the pilgrims upon, they have been seized by your soldiery. I have come to take them back”, said Abd-ul-Muttalib.

“You come for your camels, your Temple too is in danger; do you not like to talk about its safety?” enquired

(i) Hayât ul Qulûb

CHAP. 3.

Abreheh. "I am the owner of the camels, I have to look to *my* property; the Temple too has a Master Who shall look to the safety of *His* House", rejoined the Arab. The Abyssinian was probably amused at the simple faith of the Arab and more probably respected the sturdy courage of the Chief in dauntlessly placing himself in the power of the enemy for the sake of the animals. The animals were restored, and Abd-ul-Muttalib drove them home.^j

Long tiresome march through parched, waterless sands had, probably, weakened and exhausted both man and beast in the invader's camp. Intense heat had poisoned their blood and they were, perhaps, loth to fight, for when the day dawned, forgetting his intention of demolishing the Kabeh and hence the wealth, trade, religion, and prestige of Mecca, the enemy sought to purchase honourable peace. In negotiating with Abd-ul-Muttalib, he offered to leave, if compensation was paid for the desecration of the cathedral and for the men the desecrating party of the Meccans had killed in making good their escape from Yemen, or an equal number of men was handed over to him to be dealt with according to their deserts. Abd-ul-Muttalib said that because guilty persons were not known, the innocent could not be punished instead; he disavowed the alleged desecration that was unjustified and against God's command but beyond that he refused to go; and as regards the Kabeh he reminded him that he was not worried about it because it had its own Master.^k

(j) Hayât-ul-Qulûb.

(k) Ibid

The enemy advanced towards the City when, suddenly, there appeared a host of swallows that dropped small stones on the unfortunate army and created havoc among man and beast. The whole army fell under Divine wrath.¹

9. Shortly before, "Abdulleh was married to Amineh, daughter of Weheb, the Chief of the Beni Zohri. In the nuptial address Abd-ul-Muttalib said, "I praise God—the praise of the
 Abdulleh
 married
 Amineh. thanksgiving, the praise which is His due.

Praise to Him for what He has gifted us with, for constituting us the neighbours of His House and the residents of its sacred precincts. Praised be He for ingraining our love and respect in the hearts of the people and gifting us with nobility of mind and ascendancy over the people and insuring us against evils and misfortunes. Praised be He Who has legalised marriage for us and banned adultery.^m

The Meccan government was at this time in the hands of ten Quraish senators. The office of a senator was hereditary in favour of the eldest member or chief of each family. Among the Senators, by the established custom, the oldest member exercised the greatest influence and bore the title of Rais or Sayyad, the Chief and Lord. "In spite of this distribution of privilege and power, the personal character and influence of Abd-ul-Muttalib gave him an undoubted pre-eminence."ⁿ They

(1) Ibn Hishám records that small-pox had broken out in Arabia for the first time that year.

(m) Hayát-ul-Qulüb.

(n) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

spread for him a carpet in front of the Kabeh as could be done for none else. Abd-ul-Muttalib sat on it in state, surrounded by his sons and kinsmen and none else could sit on the carpet.”^o

10. A year after his marriage Abduleh died in the 25th year of his age. Some two months after the Mohammed's destruction of the Abysinnian invaders, the birth. bereaved widow gave birth to Mohammed, on the 12th of Rabi.I. in the first year of the era of the Elephant (40th year of the reign of Kisra Nushirwán, 29th, August. 570 A.D.) According to custom Mohammed was entrusted to the care of a bedouine wet-nurse named Helimeh, of the Bení Sad, a clan of the Bení Hewázin. In due time he was returned to his mother Ámineh, who died during his sixth year. The doubly orphaned child was thus cast entirely on the hands of his aged grand-father who watched the child with the utmost tenderness. In 579. A. C, shortly after his return from a journey to Sená, whither he had gone “as the Qureish representative to congratulate Seif bin Zi-Yezen on his getting the throne of the Tobbas with the help of the Persians”^p, the venerable Abd-ul-Muttalib, the defender of the Kabeh and of his country was gathered to his fathers. The sturdy old patriarch even on his death-bed did not forget the orphan, Mohammed.

“As he lay on his State-carpet in front of the Kabeh he called his sons together and entrusting the lad to Abú Talib, bade him take very special care of the sacred trust, and wished the same of all his sons and the Qureish

(o) Hayár-ul-Qulúb.

(p) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

chiefs who had come round to bid their Raïs their last farewell."^q

11. Abd-ul-Muttalib never gambled, nor worshipped idols nor ate the flesh of animals sacrificed at the altar of stone-gods and was a Monotheist. He ordained against sexual intercourse with father's widows on their coming as heirloom to the son as was the previous practice, fixed the number of circumambulations round the Kabeh at seven and fixed also the whergeld or price of human blood at a hundred camels.^r

Abd-ul-
Muttalib's
Institutes.

On his father's death Abú Tálíb succeeded to the honours and dignities of the City. He "too, besides his sacerdotal character as guardian of the Kabeh, was one of the most enterprising merchants"^s. "The princely munificence of Háshim and Abd-ul-Muttalib had told upon fortunes of their heirs, and the Háshemites, owing to the lack of means, were fast losing their position."^t But how "the good Abú Tálíb took his nephew to his bosom and ever afterwards was to him as a parent,"^u how he incurred unpopularity among the orthodox,^v dared the wrath of his people^w and ultimately ruined his business by inviting ostracism and a long imprisonment in a siege^x, and how he, at last, died depriving his progeny of the ancestral and hereditary honours of the Kabeh for the sake of Mohammed, are matters which

(q) Hayát-ul-Qulúb.

(r) Hayát-ul-Qulúb.

(s) The life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(t) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

(u) The life of Mohomet by W. Irving.

(v) Ch. 11. P. 8. (w) Ch. 11. P. 8. (x) Ch. 11. P. 9-10.

shall unfold themselves in the course of the narrative. Mohammed's history is filled with the history of Abú Tálib whose son is Ali.

CHAPTER IV. MOHAMMED'S WARD.

Famine - Ali entrusted to Mohammed - Mohammed's ways—that Ali followed—its moral advantage to Ali.

1. In the 35th year of the era of the Elephant (608 A. D.) there was a great famine at Mecca. Abú Tálib, who had been taxing his finances to maintain charitable disbursements appertaining to the office of the Sheikh of the City of the Kabeh up to the high level fixed by the munificence of his ancestors, was feeling the effects of the famine. Mohammed who had enjoyed the Sheikh's generous hospitality^a and was now rich on account of his business activities^b and marriage with Khedíjeh^c wished to help his patiently suffering kinsman; delicacy restrained him from making a direct offer of relief to his patron. He made his rich uncle Abbás see the desirability of lending a helping hand to their Sheikh and relative. Ali, who had sucked his first^d sustenance out of el Amin's tongue was, accordingly, brought to Mohammed's keeping, Jafer to that of Abbás and Aqíl remained with his father. Thus did Mohammed repay the Sheikh's hospitality that had been extended to himself so generously and for so many years.

2. Was it a mere chance which brought Ali to Mohammed? Was it a mere fondness that one is likely to contract for a healthy, happy baby of the house where one has happened to be for some time that led Mohammed to secure the custody of the

(a) Ch. 3. P. 10-11. (b) Ch. 6. P. 1. (c) Ch. 6. P. 3.

(d) Ch. 2. P. 3.

laughing, lisping child? Was it the sentiment which he felt and expressed at the baby's first sight that led him to hug closer the person who was to give him the last bath? Was it inspiration or intuition which led Mohammed to take the child under personal supervision, to train him in his own ideas for being of use at some future time, in some great task that was till then not patent? The answer is not yet clear, but subsequent history shows that the two cousins who had been together under Abú Tálíb's roof had thus joined together never to part again in life, in life's work, the method of work, and the end and aim of life's work.

3. Álí lived with Mohammed and shared Mohammed's meals. At the age of five, the boy cannot be expected to share Mohammed's thoughts but Together. Álí did follow the ways and routine of Mohammed's life.

From the din and noise of boisterous Mecca, Mohammed was in the habit of retiring into the solitude of the caverns of Mount Hirá to think his great thought and to commune with the Infinite. After his childish exercises Álí also could find time to go thither to rest his muscular little limbs in the quiet of the caverns. There he would get lessons from his thoughtful cousin and imbibe impressions from the deep meditations of his loving kinsman and guardian. Álí describes the routine of life:-

"When I was a mere boy, you^f used to take me in your arms and hug me to your holy bosom, We used to

(e) *ibid.*

(f) "You" in the passage refers to Mohammed, the Prophet.

be in the same bed, you allowed me the privilege of contact with your body of which I enjoyed the warmth and inhaled the holy fragrance. I followed you about as the camel's young does follow its mother. Every day you taught me a principle of high ethics and asked me to put it in practice. Annually you secluded yourself for a month in the solitudes of mount Hirá, where I alone and none else could see you in your meditations."g

4. It was a great privilege; its one great advantage to Áli was that he never worshiped idols.^h Hence do the Muslims proudly affix to Áli's name the great phrase that their Prophet was the first to use in reference to Áli, viz. "*Karram Allah Wajehú*, because Áli had never debased himself by bowing in worship before idols.ⁱ

(g) *Nehj-ul-Belāgheh*.

(h) *Rauza-tus-Sefá*

(i) *Menāqeb Murtezawí*. (Literally, Allah dignified his face).

CHAPTER V. UNIVERSAL GLOOM.

Creeds in Arabia—Christianity—Judaism — Zoroastrianism —
Hinduism—Buddhism—Social and political gloom—called for a
Reformer.

It was a nauseating gloom that enveloped mankind at the dawn of Islam. Three hundred and sixty stone-gods, housed in the Kabeh, held Arabia in abject terror of their potency. There were tribes that professed Christianity or Judaism; Zoroastrianism and star-worship also was prevalent; agnosticism and atheism were not unknown in the Peninsula which was, so to say, a cockpit of degenerate religions and creeds.

1. Christianity had no clear idea of the Oneness of God. Jesus stood deified. The Mother of God had led Christianity to Mariolatry; the Cross was not so much a sacred symbol, as an object of worship. The Sabillians, believing in the Unity of God, held the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to be one substance representing three different states or relations of Divinity. The Arians held the Son to be distinct from and inferior to the Father and denied Divinity to the Holy Ghost. The Nestorians abominated styling Mary the Mother of God, and declared Jesus to be possessed of two natures, one human and the other Divine. The Monophysites held the two natures to be so mingled in Jesus as to form one nature. The Eutychians denying the duality held that Jesus was entirely God before Incarnation and entirely man during Incarnation. The Mariamites and Collyridians deified and worshipped Mary. The Nazarenes considered Christ as the Messiah, born of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost and possessing

something of a Divine nature; the Ebionites believed Christ to be pure man, the greatest of the prophets. The Docetes held Jesus' nature to be entirely Divine, that his human form was a mere phantom, shape without substance, and that Crucifixion and Resurrection were deceptive mystical exhibitions for the benefit of the human race. The Corpocratians, Basilidians and Valentinians held that Jesus was merely a wise virtuous man, the son of Joseph and Mary, imparted with Divine nature at his baptism by St. John.

Practical Christianity was in no better plight. Monasticism had deprived the world of the humanising influence of its good men. Day and night the exclusive monk selfishly prayed for his Salvation, little caring to come out of his oyster-shell to mix with his fellow men and work for the regeneration of a miserable world. The professional priest was too busy in political wire-pulling or in aping the debauched ways of profane aristocracy to care for Evangelism. Corruption and license of the heads of the Church and the State at Constantinople had filtered through and saturated all strata of society. The Church was less a vehicle of reform and more of an engine of political tyranny and class domination. Byzantine Christianity smelled too much of politics and no wonder if it did not gain any appreciable ground in Arabia.

2. Judaism was not backed by any political authority, and may be, therefore, that it claimed a larger following among the inhabitants of Arabia.

Judaism. When Palestine was ravaged and Jerusalem sacked by the Romans, the Jews settled in Arabia and gained great wealth and importance. Jealousy and

treachery was the curse which kept them from getting very popular among the Arabs or becoming a source of any wholesome influence. The pristine purity of the religion of the ancient Patriarchs had become defiled through idolatry. The Jews had taken up from Zoroastrianism the idea of a God of Good and a God of Evil.

3. Zoroastrianism was the State-religion of the great Persian empire. The original simplicity and spirituality of the religion had become complicated and confused by the introduction of a dual divinity. Gods of Good and Evil—Yezdán and Ahermen—perpetually struggled for mastery over men who got intimidated into the worship of both. “Light”—originally a symbol—began to be worshipped. A perpetual fire was kept alight in the temples. To propitiate the Divinity, the fanatics caught hold of the unbelievers and hurled them in the consuming flames. During the course of time, Persia evolved a system whereby men enjoyed “community in wealth, women, and good things of the world”, although the enjoyment thereof mostly fell to the lot of the more powerful.

4. Hinduism and Budhism, though not prevalent in Arabia, may be mentioned just to complete the survey of the more important religions that governed human thought and action at that period of time. A theist and anatheist, a monotheist and a polytheist, a pantheist and an agnostic, one who believed in the Vedas and the one who repudiated them, were all within the fold of Hinduism. Divine Omnipotence and co-existence with the Divine Being, of Matter and Soul, was not incongruous. The beautiful allegory that mankind had a common origin from a Divine organism was pet-

rified into a law which debased fellow-men to the status of a Sudra, a status hardly distinguishable from that of animals. Death, disease and sexuality were deified and human life and virtue was sacrificed at the altar of the deities. Polyandry was rampant. Temples had become dens of idolatry and devotional licentiousness. Blind dogmatism had vanquished the ancient Rishis' simple spiritualism in its senility to an extent which may best be imagined by the fact that in the 20th century of the Christian era, one University town in India, has the privilege of possessing a number of holy idols far surpassing the aggregate of the sacred commodity that could be available in the whole of Arabia when Islam began its iconoclastic work of regeneration.

5. Buddhist scriptures do no mention God. The world according to that creed is eternal change, misery and mirage and the way out is not good actions but non-action. Transmigration of souls is the law of life; through good actions or bad you take rebirth to work anew in this world of change, misery and mirage. Thus actions, good or bad, cause rebirth and, therefore, misery. By non-action alone can rebirth be avoided and the law of Trans-migration cheated of its operation. To go out of the living world into the jungles is the teaching of Budha. He does not reform society but annihilates it; not social regeneration but individual salvation is his creed. His is a gospel of social and individual death and obliteration, and not of life and action,

6. "Mankind had never in history been poorer in stock of happiness and well-being. Unutterable desolation brooded over the empires and kingdoms of the

Practical Life. earth. In the West as in the East the masses were in utter misery; deprived of civil rights on political privileges, they were ground down by laws which the powerful made to secure and augment their own interests." The King in India was divine and his advisers sacrosanct. The King was the absolute owner of the soil and the peasant a serf. To the king belonged the rule, and legislation to the priestly ministers who subdivided society into four classes. The Kshatriya fought and ruled; the Vaisha tilled and traded; the Sudra was the hewer of wood and drawer of water; the Brahman directed the King, blessed the subject, and lived upon both as minister and priest.

The Sudra was untouchable, whose very shadow meant pollution to the other castes. If he sat on the seat of a Brahman, his bottoms were to be scraped, if he heard the scriptures, he was to have molten lead poured into his ears. He could own no property. He must serve, but must keep himself at such a distance as to avoid his shadow from falling on the person, meals or path of the caste Hindus. He was more valuable than a lion and less valuable than a horse.

"The Persian Kings were gods and absolute masters of the people. The priests and the lords had monopolised all power, privileges and prosperity, crushing the peasantry under a lawless despotism. In sectarian turmoil, the licentiousness of its sovereigns, degeneration of its aristocracy, the over-weening pride of its priesthood, the Persians only rivalled the Byzantines. In the Byzantine Empire, the clergy and the great magnates,

courtezans and other nameless ministrants to the vices of the Caesar and the proconsul were the happy possessors of wealth, power and influence. The people grovelled in the most abject misery"^k

7. Under these conditions prevailing in the world, the wild son of the desert was still wilder in his actions and beliefs. His ignorance was colossal, and
 Arabia. vengeance terrible, that descended from father to son and lower down. Female infanticide was the rule of honour, vile superstition knew no bounds, good and bad were among them no separate terms. Adultery, dead drunkenness, gambling, murder and marauding were the routine of his life. Proud like lucifer, mercurial of temperament, exclusive and isolated by tribal environment, he was very prone to give offence and repel insult which not unoften set aflame inter-tribal war lasting for generations in which daughters of Venus encouraged the soldier or reprimanded the coward with the promise or withdrawal of their love. They took omens from the flying of birds or of arrows; during a drought they tied hay to the tail of a cow and setting it aflame would let loose the poor helpless animal to draw rain from on high. The son inherited his father's widows and concubines. Girls were captured, pilfered or purchased, and earning money out of their harlotry was neither immoral nor undignified. Men and women mixed together to perform nude Pilgrimages. For scarcity of food the Son of the Sands ate up anything and everything without reference to sanitation or hygiene. Epicurianism was his creed and vendetta his religion. The murdered man's soul transformed itself into a bird crying for the

(k) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

blood of the murderer and continued hovering and crying till it got its demand. It was the survivors' duty to arrange for the rest and appeasement of the soul of the deceased. Adultery, idolatry and slavery ran rampant in Arabia. Succintly but quite aptly the Muslim historians call it the "Age of Ignorance"

8. If social and intellectual chaos have ever demanded and foretold reform they surely proclaimed the advent of a Reformer at the beginning of the 7th century of the Christian era.

Needed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CALL.

Birth of Mohammed—becomes Abû Tâlib's ward—Mohammed's early life—the "Trusty" marries Khadijeh—Communion—Call to the Apostolate.

1. Abd-ul-Muttalib's son Abdulleh died shortly after his marriage. The youthful widow gave birth to her only child Mohammed, and died when he was hardly six. The orphan was brought up under the care of his grandfather who bequeathed the charge to his eldest son Abû Tâlib. "The good Abû-Tâlib took his nephew to his bosom and ever afterwards was to him as a parent. As the former succeeded to the guardianship of the Kabeh at the death of his father, Mohammed continued for several years in a kind of sacerdotal household, where the rites and ceremonies of the sacred house were rigidly observed. He was a thoughtful child, quick to observe, prone to meditate on all that he observed and possessed of an imagination fertile, daring and expansive, and as he increased in years, a more extended sphere of observation was gradually opened to him, he had an intelligence far beyond his years. The spirit of inquiry was awake within him quickened by intercourse with pilgrims from all parts of Arabia. Abû Tâlib, besides his sacerdotal character as guardian of the Kabeh, was one of the most enterprising merchants of the tribe of Koreish and had much to do with those caravans set on foot by his ancestor Haschem which traded to Syria and Yemen¹." "These merchantile expeditions brought Mohammed in contact with men and their affairs. As

Mohammed,
Abû Tâlib,
and Khedijeh.

(1) The life of mahomet by W. Irving.

he advanced in years and in business he was invited to take up work as Khedijeh's factor." She was a widowed merchant-princess of the tribe of Qureish, vastly rich in cash, cattle and kine, moveable and immoveable property. After her husband's death she needed some one to conduct her huge business which employed no less than eighty thousand camels to carry the goods backwards and forwards in the country^m. Reports of Mohammed's honesty and ability led her to offer him double wages for conducting her trade caravan to Syria. By and with the advice of his uncle Abú Tálib, Mohammed took up the job and did it so well that the grateful lady paid him double the stipulated wages. Another expedition proved as satisfactory. The youthful factor's good qualities and manly beauty inspired tenderer feelings and the lady offered him her hand. The marriage was celebrated with Abú Tálib's approval.

2. Mohammed was poorer in worldly wealth and had been the bride's employee. Lest the marriage should be gossiped about as a pecuniary affair, the selling away of the bridegroom's handsome youth for the bride's riches, it was solicitude for Mohammed's happiness and self-respect that made Patriarch Abú Tálib address the merchant-princess in the presence of the marriage-party: "compare him (Mohammed) with whomsoever you will, and you will find him by far the better man". Having thus silenced gossip's tongue Abú Tálib paid from his own purse the dower—twelve and a half Okks of gold—price of twenty young camels. Khadíjeh was forty and Mohammed twenty-five at the time of the marriage which was his

Mohammad
and Khedijah

(m) Hayát ul Qulúb.

first. The marriage was unalloyed happiness for the parties and good for Islam. The lady's riches brought Mohammed more leisure to think his great thoughts of World-regeneration; it enabled him to take charge of Ali during the famineⁿ, and to spend the money which the lady ungrudgingly gave to relieve the sufferings of early Muslims, and lastly the marriage produced Fátiméh, "Our Lady of Light", who was subsequently married to Ali, to be the guiding-star of the female world, in piety, chastity and all those qualities that make woman beloved of man.

3. Mohammed's marriage with Khedijeh placed him "among the most wealthy of his native city. His moral worth also gave him great influence in the community. Allah, says the historian Abul Fidá, accomplished and adorned an honest man; he was so pure and sincere, so free from every evil thought that he was commonly known by the name of el Amín or the Faithful. The great confidence reposed in his judgement and probity caused him to be frequently referred to as arbiter in disputes between his townsmen".^o Mohammed earned widespread gratitude by reviving, in the 30th year of the Elephant, the old Hilf-ul-Fuzúl, for the protection of the citizens and of pilgrims in Mecca. The Hilf was a pact of 3 gentlemen of influence (all named Fezal, hence the Plural Fuzúl) binding themselves to be the good Samaritans. In the 35th year, when the Kabeh was rebuilt, the tribes disputed over the right of refixing the sacred Black Stone. A war was imminent. Mohammed had a great cloth spread on the ground,

(n) Ch. 4. P. 1.

(o) The life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

placed the Stone thereon and bade each tribe's representative hold the border of the cloth to equally share the honour of carrying it and himself fixed it at the proper place. Every body applauded him for averting a fratricidal war that was so imminent.

Shortly afterwards, Uthmán, an Arab, embraced Christianity, accepted a bribe at the Court of Constantinople to betray Mecca to the Byzantines. Mohammed exposed the traitor's intentions and saved his countrymen the humiliation of foreign subjection and its tyrannies..

4. Afar and away from the noise and bustle of the ignorant world, in the rocks of Hirá, in the deep great silence of the calm atmosphere, under the clear blue sky of Arabia, enveloped in his profound meditation sat Mohammed, communing with the Infinite and thinking, as usual, the noble thoughts of human regeneration, when a voice from on high, in strong clear accents, spoke to him, "O thou, wrapped up in thy sheet, arise, warn, and preach the Majesty of thy God".^p According to another version the voice said, "Speak in the name of thy God who created thee".^q

It was a novel experience. The whole universe seemed to have jumped up into a new life. The sky, the atmosphere, the mountain, and the rocks, the outstretching plains, the stones and the pebbles seemed to be repeating the words of the Voice with one all-pervading tongue. The Universe seemed to be enveloped in a flood of celestial light. He hurried home. Coming down the

(p) The Quran Ch. 74. v. 1 (Mudasser)

(q) Ibid Ch. 96. v. 1. (Aleq).

rock, the student of Hirá felt the earth underneath, the sky overhead, the trees, the stones and the surrounding horizon greeting him as the Prophet of God.

Thus was Mohammed on the 27th day of the month of Rajab, in the 40th year of the era of the Elephant, (610 A. D.) "Called" by the Voice of Heaven to "Evangelize and to Reprove."^r

(r) Bashir (an) vs Nazir.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEACHER AND THE DISCIPLE.

Khedijeh Believes and reassures the Apostle—Ali Believes—Abū Tālib's support.

1. Mohammed came home to Khedijeh, agitated and perturbed at his new experience and the great burden he had been called upon to bear. Khedijeh, first Believer. Khedijeh comforted him and said, "Rejoice, Allah will not suffer thee to fall to shame. Hast thou not been loving to thy kinsfolk, kind to thy neighbours, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, faithful to thy word, and ever a defender of the truth?"^s She assured him that she would thenceforward regard him as the Prophet of God. Khedijeh was thus the first convert to the Faith of her husband.

2. "The good Khedijeh, we can fancy, listened to him with wonder, with doubt, at length she answered: Yes, it was true, this that he said. One can fancy too the boundless gratitude of Mahomet and how of all the kindnesses she had done, this, of believing the earnest struggling word he now spoke was the greatest. 'It is certain', says Novalis, 'My conviction gains infinitely, the moment another soul will believe in it'. It is a boundless favour. He never forgot this good Kadijeh. Long afterwards, Ayesha, his young favourite wife, who indeed distinguished herself among the Muslims, by all manner of qualities, through her whole long life; this young brilliant Ayesha was, one day questioning him. 'Now, am not I better than Khedijeh?

(s) The life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

She was a widow; old, and had lost her looks; You love me better than you did her?' 'No. By Allah,' answered Mahommet; 'No. By Allah. She believed in me when none else would believe. In the whole world, I had but one friend and she was that'^t

3. If the word "conversion" implies the repudiation of one religion and adoption of another, Ali cannot be said to be a convert. From early childhood he had been following Mohammed.^u In his 10th year he finds his guardian declaring his Call to the Apostolate and he continues following him as he had already been doing, as the "she-camel's young does follow its mother"^v Shortly after "the Call", Abú Tálib found Mohammed and Ali praying in seclusion. Their attitude indicated deep absorption and humility before the Divine Presence, but the method of worship was novel and new. The father's presence moved or perturbed not the little worshipper; nor did the old patriarch interrupt the devotions of his son and nephew. The prayer over, Ali in his juvenile enthusiasm replied to his parent's query, "I believe in the Divinity of Allah and the Prophethood of Mohammed. I follow the commands of Allah and his Prophet." "Follow him, my son," encouraged Abú Tálib, verily Mohammad shall lead thee to righteousness"

(t) Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes and Hero-Worship.

(u) Ch. 4. P. 1. (v) Ch. 4 P. P. 3-4.

CHAPTER VIII. THE LITTLE BODY-GUARD.

Meccan persecution—youthful Ali protects the Prophet.

Mohammed preached, gained some followers but more enemies. The Qureish were irritated. The elders elaborated hindrances, their youths assailed him with lampoons and ribaldry and their boys jeered at him, hooted him in the streets, spread thorns in his way and pelted him with stones.

1. Ali's boyish brain thought that he could protect the Prophet against the juvenile persecution. He requested for and getting the permission ^{Mohammed's body-guard.} accompanied his guardian about. Whenever the little prankish monkeys who were, as a matter of fact, set by their parents to persecute the Prophet came within reach Ali would fell them and administer such physical chastisement as to make them run and cry, "Ali beats us", "Ali beats us". This seems to have so impressed the Meccan boys that they did not forget it soon. In the battle of Ohedw, when Ali engaged Telheh bin Abi Telheh, the famous Qureish warrior is reported to have recognised his armoured antagonist Ali and said, "I recognise you, O, Qusem^x."

It would be premature to expect any, or, at any rate, much of intellectual appreciation at this early life but it would not require much imagination or research to say that there did exist a strong spiritual affinity bet-

(w) Ch. 17. P. 11.

(x) Qusem, (S stands for a suād) c/e who beats, one who breaks. This is Ali's nick-name given him by his play-mates of early life. Mātem Kedeh.

ween the two cousins. Play is the be-all and end-all of a healdy boy's life and play-mates are the life and soul of play. A boy would do a lot of things—evading his parents, tricking his elders, his work and what the grown-ups call conscience—before giving up play or play-mates. But Ali did it. He sacrificed his popularity among his play-mates, risked his chances of play and courted loneliness and ostracism. There must have arisen an instinctive understanding, a bond of intimate association between the two that was strong enough to lead Ali to do this for the sake of his cousin, guardian, Teacher and Prophet.

How this mutual attraction and admiration grew stronger and stronger and led Ali to make his sacrifices greater and greater as he grew in years, and to make them with a better and better understanding, for larger and better interests, with higher and more far-reaching results would be unfolded in these pages.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BEARER OF MOHAMMED'S BURDEN.

Abú Leheb impedes the Apostle—the "Call to the Kinsmen"—
Ali responds—and is called the Apostle's vizier, vicegerent and
Caliph—the Meccans' ridicule.

1. Mohammed worked for three years. The number of his converts did not exceed forty, but the Qureish had already started opposition. A rabble attacked the cavern where the Muslims were at prayers. The Prophet's uncle, Abú Leheb, a proud, short tempered, wealthy, violent man, allied (by marriage with Umme Jemil, the sister of Abú Sufiyan, the head of the Bení Abd ush Shams) to that branch of the Qureish that was jealous and envious of Háshimite prestige and power, played in the hands of the Bení Abd ush Shams who now found the opportunity of bringing the Háshimites bad name for Mohammed's heresy and impiety. Abú Leheb, his wife and son Utbeh, were, among the Ummeyyádes, the most vociferous and troublesome enemies of Islam.

In the fourth year of the Call, Mohammed called a meeting of the Qureish to invite them to his faith. To the meeting came the noisy Abú Leheb and his scoffing wife, Umme Jemil, who caused its dispersal as soon as it began.

2. Shortly after, Mohammed invited the Háshimites in Abú Tálib's castle. Ali prepared a feast of lamb's meat and milk. After the feast Mohammed addressed them. "Sons of Abd-ul-Muttalib! I have to communicate to you news, the happiest you have ever heard. I bring to you blessings of this world

and the Hereafter. If I tell you that an overpowering army is to be upon you in a day or two, will you believe me?" "Yes, we will, we will, for we know you are a truthful man", replied they, with one voice.

3. "Listen then", continued Mohammed, "for a friend and a well-wisher will never lie. Allah has appointed me to be His Prophet and commanded me to 'warn' you, my kinsmen and relatives, before all others. Know further, ye sons of Abd-ul-Muttalib, God has never sent an Apostle but that from amongst His people someone has always been appointed to be his deputy. Whosoever now tenders me allegiance and assists me in my task of right guidance and helps me against my opponents shall be my brother, vizier, representative and Caliph to propagate my Faith and, after my death, to represent me and to complete my task"^v.

4. Experienced old aristocrats who would bow before his word of advice, fiery young Arabs of the bluest blood who would at his bidding unsheathe their tempered swords and fly at death were dumb, silent. Forty or eighty were the nobles that formed Mohammed's unresponsive audience. Many of them must have thought of the folly of their belief, many must have doubted the use and wisdom of idol-worship, but hidebound thought and centuries-old custom was not easy to run away from. Petrified superstition must have presented the vengeance of angry idols, in a thousand and one dreadful shape, to the intending apostates. Idol-breaking meant the desolation of the Kabeh on which depended their noble position and

prestige in the country. The meeting was of the Beni Abd-ul-Muttalib; should they go with Mohammed, their rivals, the Beni-Abd-ush-Shams, of everlasting jealousy and enmity would use the 'heresy and impiety' for bringing about the overthrow of the line of Hâshim. Considerations of temporal policy, if not of religious belief, must have stood in the way of welcoming Mohammed's proposition. An ominous silence prevailed. "In His name I offer you the blessings of this world, and endless joys Hereafter. Who among you will share the burden of my offer. Who will be my brother, my lieutenant, my vizier? All remained silent; some wondering; others smiling with incredulity and derision. At length Ali, starting up with youthful zeal, offered himself to the services of the Prophet."^z The Prophet looked with hopeful—grateful eyes at his youthful ward who, undismayed and firm, stood, in the midst of his aristocratic elders, like a torch of unflickering light in the surrounding gloom, his warm voice of youth pronouncing in clear accents of determination, "I swear allegiance on whatever terms you please".^a "Prophet of Allah, I shall fight thy enemies with my spear and blind their eyes".^b

But Mohammed asked his ward to see if any others accepted the offer. Thrice did the Prophet reiterate his appeal and thrice did Ali and Ali alone respond to it. "Mohammed threw his arms round the generous youth and pressed him to his bosom, Behold my brother, my vizier and my viceregent exclaimed the Prophet. 'Let

(z) Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(a) Hayât-ul-Qulûb.

(b) Abul-Fidâ. (c) Hayât-ul-Qulûb.

all listen to his words and obey him".^d This is known as the "Call to the Kinsmen".

"The outbreak of such a stripping as Ali, however, was answered by a scornful burst of laughter of the Kureishites, who taunted Abu Talib, the father of the youthful proselyte, with having to bow down before his son and yield him obedience"^e

A passage from T. Carlyle's *Heroes and Heroworship* may well be quoted here:-

5. Mohammed invited forty of his chief kindred to an entertainment; and there stood up and told them what his pretension was, that he had this thing to promulgate abroad to all men, that it was the highest thing; which of them would second him in that. Amid the doubt and silence of all, young Ali, as yet a lad of sixteen, impatient of the silence, started up, and explained in passionate fierce language, that he would; the assembly, among whom was Abu Talib, Ali's father, could not be unfriendly to Mahomet; yet the sight there, of one unlettered elderly man, with a lad of sixteen, deciding on such an enterprise against all mankind, appeared ridiculous to them; the assembly broke up in laughter. Nevertheless it proved not a laughable thing, it was a very serious thing; as for this young Ali, one cannot but like him, a noble-minded creature, as he shows himself, now and always afterwards; full of affection, of fiery daring. Something chivalrous in him; brave as a lion; yet with a grace, a truth and affection worthy of Christian Knighthood".

(d) *Life of Mahomet* by W. Irving and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Davenport's *Apology for Mohammed*. Gibbon.

(e) *Life of Mahomet* by W. Irving.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROPHETS' RESCUER.

The Qureish disperse Mohammed's audience—besiege him—
Khedijeh and Ali rescue him

1. Undismayed and undiscouraged the Prophet prayed for his persecutors, preached to them and taught them the Religion of Peace. He preached in fairs and he preached wherever men gathered together. He exhorted them to renounce idolatry and their bad ways, to come back to the simple religion of Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus before man had adulterated, misinterpreted it and intorpolated in it.

2. As he was once preaching from the height of Mount Sefá to the pilgrims, the Meccans, oblivious of the holy peace of the season of the Pilgrimage, rushed at the Preacher who passed onto the hill of Merweh. The Preacher's Truth attracted his audience behind him. The Meccans pursued him and the Preacher passed on to the hill Abú Qubeis. His audience, eager to learn, followed him thither and so did his Qureish persecutors who pelted him with stones.

3. Khedijeh and Ali heard of it and ran to the rescue. They shielded and sheltered him and succeeded, with great difficulty, in escorting him home, under cover of the night. Relentless Meccans rallied again and began stoning his house at night. Khedijeh, his wife, and Ali, his cousin, were his only companions in the house. The Prophet reminded his assailants that they were showing disrespect to the house of a lady who was the best of their females. This shamed the oppressors into compunction and withdrawal.

CHAPTER XI

MOHAMMED AND ABU TALIB.

Abû Tâlib shields Mohammad against Mecca—his son Jafar leads helpless Muslims to Abyssinian asylum—Meccans seek extradition—Amr bin Aas—Jafar pleads against extradition—expounds Islam—Amr's treachery—Hemzeh chastises Abû Jihl—Qureish deputation against Mohammed rebuked by Abû Tâlib—Abû Sufyân agitates—motive—Hashimites ostracised and besieged in Abû Tâlib's castle—Abû Tâlib risks Ali's life for Mohammed—Abu Tâlib's death—and Khedjeh's.

1. Persecution failing to intimidate Mohammed, the Qureish sought to purchase his silence or win him by persuasion. "If he wants a wife, we will offer him the most beautiful maiden in all Arabia; if he wants money, we will collect for him the amount that he names; if he aims at power, we will take him as our King; if he is possessed of the devil, we will get him the services of the best devil-doctor to cure him of his malady", said they to Abû Tâlib, "but let him renounce his heretical preachings" Abû Tâlib informed Mohammed, and received the enthusiastic reply, "Even if they place the Sun on my right hand and the Moon on the left I will not renounce my mission until God commands me otherwise, or death seals my lips". With this Mohammed rose to depart from the protection of his uncle and Sheikh, not wanting to stretch Abû Tâlib's kind protection too far. Mohammed's dejected mien, his undaunted firmness won the old Sheikh's admiration and made him express his generous mind, "Preach, my son, what you like, I will never abandon you to your enemies." The Sheikh called upon his tribesmen to aid in the protection of their kinsman; the Hâshimites, with the exception of Abû Leheb, responded to the generous call.

Abû Tâlib's
promise.

2. The Qureish became irritated and more virulent. They began persecuting the more helpless of the converts. Bilál, an Ethiopian slave, was taken out by his master to lie on the back, on the burning sands and face to the dazzling, scorching Sun of Arabia. But the slave with a heavy stone on his chest would, day after day, lie in the Sun from morn till eve without showing any signs of slackening his fervour for the faith. Another female convert had her legs tied to two camels that were driven in opposite directions till the unfortunate zealot was torn asunder.

3. Under the dreadful persecution the tiny band of converts was in peril of extinction. Mohammed, in the fifth year of the Call, sent them, under, Jafer Bin Abú Tálib, to Alysinnia. The exodus is termed the "first Flight" as distinguished from the Flight of the Prophet from Mecca.^f

4. A Qureish deputation waited upon the Alysinnian King, a Nestorian Christian, to demand extradition of the fugitives, but Jafer's eloquence so impressed the king that he refused extradition. His speech being a beautiful epitome of Islam is quoted here as a specimen of the Háshimites eloquence, together with a prefatory description of the deputationists' recklessness, by way of contrast and to reveal the state of Meccan morals.

Amr bin el Aas and Ammáreh bin Welíd were the Qureish deputationists; voyaging to Alysinnia, they drank like fish. Ammáreh, a handsome strong man, stimulated by the bouts they had been having together,

(f) Ch. 12. P. 4.

asked Amr to let his wife kiss the speaker. The husband refused and was pushed down into the sea by the intoxicated lover. The drowning husband was pulled up by the sailors. The deputationists, at last, were duly ushered into the audience of the Negus; prostrating before him and offering the customary presents they requested for the extradition of the Arab refugees.

5. The refugess arrived, headed by Jafer. The court functionaries demanding the customary prostration before the king heard from Jafer. "We
Jafer at Court prostrate not but before God". On the Negus narrating the object of the Qureish mission Jafer replied, "are we their run-away slaves or freemen; are we their debtors run away with debts unpaid; are we murderers liable to their law of retribution?" The deputationists said they were not slaves but freemen and respectable people; they were not law-breakers but apostates who refused to worship the national gods, they followed a new religion and abducted men from they establised religion, Jafer said, "O King. we were a barbarous folk, worshipping idols, eating carrion, committing shameful deeds, violating the ties of consanguinity, and evilly treating our neighbours, the strong amongst us consuming the weak. And thus we continued until God sent us an Apostle, from our midst, whose pedigree and integrity and faithfulness and purity of life we know, to summon us to God that we should declare His Unity and worship Him, and put away the stones and idols which we and our fathers used to worship in His stead, and he bade us be truthful in speach, and faithful in the fulfilment of our trusts, and observing of the ties of consanguinity and the duties towards neighbours, and to refrain from forbidden things and from blood, and he forbade us from

immoral acts and deceitful words, and from consuming the property of orphans, and from slandering virtuous women, and he commanded us to worship God and to associate naught else with Him, and to pray and give alms and fast. So we accepted him as true and believed in him and followed him in that which he brought from God, worshipping God alone and associating naught else with Him, and holding unlawful that which he prohibited to us, and lawful that which he sanctioned unto us. Then our people molested us, and persecuted us, and strove to seduce us from our faith that they might bring us back from the worship of God to the worship of idols, and induce us to hold lawful the evil practices which we had formerly held lawful. So they strove to compel us, and oppressed us, and constrained us, and strove to come between us and our religion. Wherefore we came forth into thy land chosing and eagerly desirous of thy protection. And now, O King, we pray that we may not be oppressed before thee"^g The deputationists tried to arouse the Negus by saying that the fugitives were against Jesus also. Jafer explained their belief that Jesus was the Spirit and Word of God, born of the Holy Virgin. At the King's desire Jafer recited a portion of the Quránic chapter entitled "Mariam", to give him a specimen of the Book revealed to the Prophet. The deputationists were refused their request for extradition.

6. Ammáreh, during his stay, had contracted lascivious feelings for one of the court girls, his companion fanning the flame of love suggested sending
 Amr's treachery, a message to the slave-girl (who was responsive but slavery bound her to her master) to send some

(g) A Lit Hist of Persia by E. G. Browne.

excellent perfume to make a present of to the Negus, in order to be able to ask for her hand in reward. In compliance, the girl sent her lover a phial from the royal stores. The perfume was fine and specially extracted for the king. Amr was told of the fact, pilfered the phial, disclosed the love intrigue and, for proof, placed the phial in the king's hand. The lover was disgraced and externed from the territories of the king whose hospitality he had abused. Thus did Amr bin el Aas avenge his private grievance^h at the expense of the honour of his nation's embassy.

7. The Qureish now ordained the banishment of all Muslims. Abú Jehlⁱ used opprobrious language and physically maltreated Mohammed while he was praying in the house of Arqem, a disciple. Mohammed's uncle, Hemzeh, a great warrior, heard of the outrage, proceeded straight to where Abú Jehl was vaunting his daring among the Qureish and dealt "the Father of Ignorance" a grievous blow on the head. The brawler meekly pleaded Mohammad's heresy in palliation of his outrage but was stunned to hear Hemzeh announce his own repudiation of idolatry and adoption of Islam. Abú Jehl ate the humble pie but, soon after, instigated his nephew Umer bin Khettáb to kill the Prophet.

8. The Qureish became desperate and urged Abú Tálíb to renounce his heretical nephew and take in exchange another equally handsome Qureish youth. The

(h) Vide P. 4. Supra.

(i) Abú Jehl, *lit.* Father of Ignorance, because of his pig-headed opposition to Islam.

Abú Talib
and
the Qureish. Sheikh was angry and scandalised at their preposterous proposition and replied, "Yours is a fine proposal. I should adopt your son to be my son and hand over my son to be murdered by you. Swords surely have not yet been unsheathed and spears have not yet pierced adversaries."

9. The Qureish returned disappointed but Abú-Tálib, fearing for the life of his nephew, took him and his disciples to his castle, a rocky redoubt close by the town. The protection drew on the Háshimites the wrath of the Qureish. Abú-Sufián, the head of the rival branch, "availed himself of the heresies of the Prophet to throw discredit, not merely upon such of his (Mohammed's) kindred as had embraced his faith but upon the whole line of Háshem. It is evident the hostility of Abu Sufian arose, not merely from personal hatred or religious scruples, but from family feud. He was ambitious of transferring to his own line the honours of the city so long engrossed by the Haschemites. The last measure of the kind-hearted Abu Táleb, in placing Mohammed and his adherents beyond the reach of persecution and giving him a castle as a refuge was seized upon by Abu Sufian and his adherents as a pretext for a general ban of the rival line. They accordingly issued a decree forbidding the rest of the Koreish tribe from intermarrying or holding any intercourse, even of bargain or sale, with the Haschemites, until they should deliver up their kinsman, Mohammed, for punishment."j

The parchment on which the decree was written was hung up in the Kabeh to sanctify its purpose and to

(j) The life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

enhance its binding force. The besieged were reduced to straits of dire distress and, not unoften, to starvation. The siege began in the seventh year of the Call and lasted for more than a couple of years, when it was taken off in the 10th year of the Call.

10. During the siege, the undaunted and undismayed figure of Abú Tálib could be seen going about his ^{Abú Tálib and} stronghold, inspecting and strengthening its ^{Abraham.} weaker points, cheering up the garrison and heartening up the smaller spirits. To frustrate traitorous espionage or surprisal, he made Mohammed constantly change places with Ali, that the son may get killed and Mohammed, the nephew, saved.^k Patriarch Abraham preparing to sacrifice his Apostolic son and the son consenting to be the sacrifice is wonderfully revived in Patriarch Abú Tálib offering to sacrifice Ali and Ali consenting to be Mohammed's sacrifice.

Giants of generous greatness, noble sons of a noble race, these Háshimites. Abd-ul-Muttalib stuck to the Kabeh, for Arabia. Abú Tálib saved Mohammed, the Prophet, for the world. Jafer bin Abú Tálib led the tiny band of Mohammed's followers out of the jaws of utter extinction.^l What Islam owes to the Háshimites is yet too early to state, but Muslims would shudder at the mere idea of what the Qureish would have done to Mohammed but for the Háshimites. Well may the Háshimite heave his head high in holy pride at having saved for the Muslims their Prophet and their Religion. It is but meet and proper that the Muslim should bow

(k) Hayát-ul-Qulúb.

(l) Vide P.P. 3, 5. Supra.

down his head in humble gratitude and thankful appreciation of what the house of Hâshim has preserved for him.

11. In the 10th year of the Call, "Mohammed was summoned to close the eyes of his uncle Abú Tálíb, then upwards of four-score years of age and venerable in character as in person."^m Mohammed mourned for Abú Tálíb. Let all Muslims join their Prophet in his great grief and bereavement. Sophisticated dogmatists perversely discuss the creedⁿ of the Protector of Islam and its Founder, but let all pedantic discussions cease, for Mohammed stands sorrowful and prayerful over the coffin of the noble Patriarch. Let all Muslims feel grieved and prayerful in memory of the great soul—the soul of one who fathered, nourished, and nurtured Mohammed, the orphan; protected, saved and preserved Mohammed, the Prophet, for preaching his Mission and the fulfilment of God's Will on earth.

12. Three days later, the great Khedijeh breathed her last. On account of the two bereavements Mohammed called it the "Year of Grief."

(m) The life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(n) Abú Tálíb's conduct on finding Ali praying with Mohammed and on another occasion making his son, Jafer, join the prayers, jeopardising his civil and sacerdotal dignities and his life for the sake of Islam strengthen Abul-Fida's statement, on the testimony of Abbás, his brother, that he died a Muslim.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER ABU TALIB—THE FLIGHT

Mohammed misses Abú Talib's protection—escapes to Táyif—hooted out—returns to Mecca—outlawed on account of Abú Sufián—is proposed to be murdered—the Flight—Ali consents to occupy Mohammed's bed to delay pursuit—significance of Mohammed's request and Ali's act—Mohammed's character—Ali, Mohammed's business-representative.

1. "Mohammed soon became sensible of the loss he had sustained in the death of Abú-Talib, who had been Abú Talib—
a loss. not merely an affectionate relative but a steadfast and powerful protector on account of his great influence in Mecca. At his death there was no one to check and counteract the hostilities of Abu Sufián and Abu Jehl, who soon raised up such a spirit of persecution among the Koreshites, that Mohammed found it unsafe to continue in his native place".^o Mohammed accordingly went out to seek refuge in Táyif—the city of the moon-godess El Lát—where the bejewelled idol of the daughter of the gods commanded the worship of the citizens. For a month Mohammed remained and preached only to be hooted out of the town, the rabble pelting him with stones. Wounded, disappointed and exhausted, he came back to Mecca where fortunes. "were becoming darker and darker—Cadija, his original benefactress, the devoted companion of his solitude and seclusion, the zealous believer in his doctrines, was in her grave, so also was Abú Talib, his faithful and efficient protector. Deprived of the sheltering influence of the latter, Mohammed had become, in a manner, an outlaw in Mecca, obliged to conceal himself. If worldly advan-

tage had been his object, how had it been attained? Upwards of ten years had elapsed since first he announced his prophetic mission, ten long years of enmity, trouble and misfortune. Still he persevered, and now, at a period of life, when men seek to enjoy in repose the fruition of the past, rather than risk all in new schemes for the future, we find him, after having sacrificed ease, fortune and friends, prepared to give up home and country also, rather than his religious creed."^p Ignorant Arabs hurled strange taunts at him, "a prophet should not rub his feet on the ground, for walking". The Bení Aamir when invited to adopt the new religion said. "If we adopt your religion and if God gives you victory over your enemies, will you assign your Caliphate to us." When the Arabs, that were thus prepared to barter away their religion for worldly gain, were told that Apostolic succession rested in Divine hands they rejoined,^q "This is good. We should, now, place our necks under your enemies' swords, but when you get the better of them we should let the Caliphate be enjoyed by others".

2. These were three years of unmitigated trouble, and disappointment for Mohammed. Abú Sufiyán, who had usurped the rule in Mecca, called a meeting of the Querish, to devise means to effectively stop Mohammed's "heresies". Mohammad's death was decided upon. To deprive the Hášimites of their *vendetta* it was agreed that all the Meccan tribes should each send a man to plunge his sword in Mohammed's body on a particular night.

(p) The life of Mohamet by W. Irvilg.

(q) Ibn Kheldun, and Ibn Athír.

3. An inspiration from on high, a self-preserving instinct, a sharpening of the senses due to living in perpetual danger of life, informed Mohammad Ali and St. Petter. about the fiendish conspiracy. The way out was to depart at once and in all secrecy. His absence from home may arouse suspicion and call up an early and fatal pursuit. He must run but conceal his absence from home—a home that the conspirators would keep a strict watch over. The pursuit must be delayed for as long a time as will place the longest distance between him and the hounds that will be set after him. Lie there must, on Mohammed's condemned bed, some one to beguile the enemy. The enemy's blind fury inadvertantly, or mad anger at having been cheated of the victim, may kill the man who dared lie on the outlaw's bed. Yes, it may be so, but that is the only way. The brave man, however, who would consent to get himself killed for the poor persecuted outlaw of a prophet, was yet to be discovered. It implied negotiating with, for which there was no time. The man may not agree, and go about talking: Oh, the dreadful consequence of failure of the negotiations. Nay, more. The man may agree for the moment, but his heart may fail him before the swords of united Mecca and precipitate a pursuit. A difficult matter indeed; but not so for Mohammed. He knows his man and goes straight to him and gives him his instructions. The man consents to be Mohammed's sacrifice and to abide by the instructions to the last. This is Ali. Human history is not devoid of instances where man has died for another, for his country or for his principle; and that is, what makes history human. Such men are "the salt of the earth and the light of the world". Consenting to die for Mohammed is not the real point. It is the

confidence that Mohammed had in Ali's loyalty and conversely it was Ali's character that led Mohammed to repose the confidence in his Disciple. Jesus of Nazareth was not so fortunate in his disciples. It was the anguished lament of a great heart that cried of St. Peter thrice denying the Master before the crowing of the cock and yet Peter is the custodian of the keys of Heaven and the rock on which the Church was to be built.

4. The Prophet is gone, gone from his birth-place and ancestors' home, the repository of countless traditions, associations and affections. He is leaving the Kabeh and the City of the Kabeh, where he had worked so long and hard, with such selfless devotion, for the uplift of his compatriots. Under the gloom of night, with a heavy, sinking heart looking back, with a longing, lingering look, on the city of his love and his persecution, he departs in safety, fervently praying for the safety of Ali and the well-being of his persecutors.

CHAPTER XIII. ALI SHIELDS MOHAMMED.

Ali in Mohammed's condemned bed—in the dark night, under the swords of united Mecca—not a fit of emotion but deliberate act—Ali's song of thanks-giving—a forecaste.

1. In outlaw Mohammed's bed, under Mohammed's green sheet, Mohammed's "brother, vizier and vicegerent" sleeps the sleep that hoary history does not record as having been slept by any other man. The Meccans and Ali. The bed lies in an open courtyard enclosed by a wall to the height of man, and beyond the enclosure roam the stealthy watch of murderous Mecca. As the night darkens and deepens, one by one, the assassins pop their heads over the wall and find the bed there as usual, and in it a man sleeping under the well-known green sheet of Mohammed. They grin the smile of fiendish satisfaction, and instead of delivering the attack, they wait on to let the night deepen and also to prolong the delight of having the victim, at last, in their clutches. Occasionally they throw a pebble or brickbat on to the sleeper, indicative of their irrepressible wrath and vengeful power. Now they enter the enclosure, surround the bed of the solitary sleeper, and pause to look, at the green coverlet of the outlaw, with demonish eyes of vengeance that was on the point of murderous satisfaction. With faces muffled and blood-thirsty swords in hand, they uncover the face of the man under the green sheet, to let him awake and see the fate his "heresies" have brought him and quiver and tremble before the national Might that he had dared defy. But oh, the disappointment! From underneath the coverlet, an uncovered face is looking at them with calm taciturnity, and the face belongs not to Mohammed but to Ali bin

Abú Tálib. "Where is Mohammed?" is hurled at him from ferocious husky throats. "You did not entrust him to me. I do not know his whereabouts", is the quiet, stiff reply of Ali, who had jumped out of the bed.

2. The dark night, the blood-thirsty swords, the dreadful atmosphere, the befooled faces of the murderous gang deprived of their victim. their secret known to the Háshimite, the curt reply of Ali which savoured too much of an insult, and for the matter of that, his whole conduct looks like a huge practical joke on their elaborated scheme of vengeance, and that at the hand of a mere stripling like Ali, the son of the man who had always stood between the wrath of their insulted religion and the punishment that Mohammed's heresies so well deserved is a panorama of the grotesque and the grand, the serio-comic and the melo-dramatic. Baffled and befooled, the Meccans disperse in shame and despair. What pleasure and gratification Ali derived from having saved his Chief, at such great peril to himself, is so beautifully, so modestly and delicately described by himself in his verses which richly deserve quotation in original Arabic:

١. وقيت بنفسي من وطى العصى و من طاف بالبيت العتيق و بام الحجر
٢. فبات رسول الله فى الغار آمناً و فى حفظ الله و فى سقر
٣. رسول الله خاف ان يهزم و به فنجاة ذو الطول الله من المكر
٤. وبت اراعيهم ما يثبتون فنى فقد نغسي على القتل ولا سر
٥. اردت به نصر الله ابتلا به و اصبرته حتى اوسد فى قبر

Literally:-

(i) At the risk of my life I saved the life of the greatest and the best of those who ever trod the earth,

or circumambulated round the ancient House of the Black Stone.

(ii) The Apostle of God kept the night in safety, in the mountain-hole; in all safety, in the keeping of Allah and under the protection of His (veils of Mystery).

(iii) Allah's Apostle apprehended harm from his foes, but the Almighty kept him from harm...

(iv) I kept the night awaiting the enemy who could not harm me; fearlessness of death or duress is ingrained in my nature.

(v) I engaged in this, merely and solely, to help (the cause of) Allah, and for the future also I am determined to do the same till I lie on my pillow in the graver.

3. A simple versification of a historic incident by one who himself played by no means an unimportant part in

it. A joyous song of a soldier-poet singing of a
 Ali's promise. duty performed and appreciation of a result

achieved. Its simple diction is, to us, more valuable than art. The poetry revivifies the poet and lays bare his brave and good heart. Not a mere mention of the Apostle, but his high worth, qualities and value are given in impressive language and in reference to the hoary antiquity of the Kabeh. The Almighty is praised for His Beneficence and helpful protection, and there is a brief mention of the Meccans' attack. In all humility, there is a barest reference to his personal connection with the affair. The poet is thankful more for the Prophet's safety than glad at his own escape from a perilous predicament. It is the soldier in the poet that speaks, in the fourth verse, of possessing a mentality, impervious to the fear of death

or duress, a soldier's proudest possession. The last line is in explanation of the first. It is not a transitory fit of impulsive madness that has made him lie in Moham-med's condemned bed; it is a well-weighed, deliberate act that is begun and completed. The poet is ready to repeat it if and when occasion recurs. Lastly, the poet's own share in the incident is not brandished in any spirit of grandiose, but is a considered moral appreciation of the personality of the Prophet that is saved and the cause that is served. Then there comes a large promise that the son of Abú Tálíb makes to the social outcast and political outlaw of a Prophet. Let history show how Alí fulfilled his generous promise made in the last verse.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTED FRIENDS MEET AGAIN.

Hot pursuit—Ali winds up Mohammed's business—follows the Master in exile and escorts his family and followers—Ali's solicitude for weaker sex.

1. Exasperated Meccans announced a hundred camels for Mohammed's head. Track parties, fired with fanaticism, lured on by the high valued prize and notoriety that the successful tracker was sure to win, ransacked the neighbourhood.

The Meccans.

The heretic, the despised, persecuted and outlawed Mohammed continued to be the city's *Trusty*. Mecca sought to murder him but it did not rush to withdraw its deposits from Mohammed. Mohammed had to run for his life but before doing so he took care to entrust to Ali the deposits of the Meccans.

2. In the midst of all this fury and frenzy, as Mohammed's business-representative, Ali disbursed the dues to his Chief's depositors. Having been thus at Mecca for three days, Ali^s started off, "journeyed on foot, hiding himself in the day and travelling only at night lest he should fall into the hands of the Koreishites. He arrived weary and way-worn, his feet bleeding with the roughness of the journey"^t and presented himself to the friend of his childhood, his guardian, teacher and Prophet at Qubá, about two miles south of Medíneh. It must have been a very touching scene, when persecuted Mohammed beheld his

Amin's business representative.

(s) Encyclopædia Britannica and Ibn Kheldūn.

(t) Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

youthful ward arriving to voluntarily share the poor exile.

3. According to another version, given by Mullá Mohammed Báqir Mejlisi, Mohammed had written to Ali (and sent the letter through Abú Wáqed) to come at once with the ladies of the family. Ali, accordingly, asked the Meccan Muslims to meet him at an appointed place. He set out with Fátimeh, the Prophet's daughter, his own mother Fátimeh, daughter of Asad, Fátimeh, daughter of Zubeir bin Abdul Muttalib and Eimen, the son of Umme Eimen. Abú-Wáqad hurried the ladies' camels, for fear of pursuit, but Ali directed him to go slower because "women are delicate creatures and ought to be made comfortable". He directed the camels-man to follow a better and smoother road. "I followed him (the Prophet)", says Ali, "at every staging I inquired about him, till I overtook him at the encamping ground of "*Arej*".^u

(u) Nehj-ul-Belágheh.

CHAPTER XV. EVERLASTING FRATERNITY.

Medineh's welcome—Mohammed conciliates the Aus and Khezrij
—evolves order out of chaos—Fraternity—Alí, the Prophet's
brother in this World and the Hereafter—a character-study.

1. The Meccan exile made a more or less triumphal entry in Medineh. Medinite Believers came out to receive him. Berideh bin el-Hoseib, of the Bení Sehem, by tying his turban to the end of his lance, improvised a standard and bore it aloft before the Prophet. As he made his way into the town, ladies of the Bení Nejjár sang him welcome from the house tops.

2. The Aus and the Khezrij tribes, the progeny of a common ancestor, had been at each other's throats for the last hundred and twenty years. Mohammed reconciled them to each other and gave them a life of brotherly peace. By friendly pacts with the non-Muslims and by generous treatment, Mohammed was able to evolve order out of chaos. Hetrogenous tribes federated to form a new State; Mohammed was the keystone of the new edifice.^v

3. Initiating the people generally into the blessings of a corporate and peaceful life, the Prophet organised his little band of Muslims and bound them together in ties of fraternity—a new fraternity,

(v) The Khezrij were very much under the sway of their kinsman Abdulla bin abi slul, a man, tall, handsome, wise and eloquent. He was about to be declared king when Mohammed's arrival in Medineh changed the direction of popular thought. This disappointed candidate for royal honours hated Islam and became the leader of the Hypocrites (Munâfiqs).

not of consanguinity or territoriality but of intellect and Faith. Five months or eight, after his arrival in Medineh, the Prophet bound one Muslim to another in the tie of the new brotherhood. Abú Biker, for instance, was joined to 'Umer bin Khettáb', Uthmán bin Effán to Abdur Rahmán bin Auf. Each one of the Muslims had, thus, a brother.

4. Ali seemed to have been left out of the scheme. All were joyous, but Ali felt lonely, thinking, perhaps, that he was the victim of an oversight. The Prophet saw Ali and his moodiness. To the Prophet's query came Ali's plaintive reply, "Master! am I not fit to be brother to anyone?"

Mohammed's
eternal
brother.

"Yes", said the Master, "*you are my brother in this World and the Hereafter.*"^w

5. Was this binding together of men a haphazard affair or was it based on an intelligent reading of affinities lying deep down in the hearts of the individuals? It is not clear yet except in the case of Ali. Mohammed and Ali were first cousins, had lived together, one was the tutor and the other disciple—a disciple that had fulfilled the hopes of the tutor. In a not very distant future, at Mohammed's demise, Ali would be as lonely as he looked before he was declared to be Mohammed's spiritual brother. With what accuracy had the Prophet read men's characters, would be evident in the matter of the Caliphate.

A character
study.

(w) Rauza tus Sefá, Seyúti.

CHAPTER XVI. AFFILIATION.

The Prophet's pious daughter, Fátiméh—amongst others Ali seeks her hand—Ali pays the dower by selling his armour—Arabia's merchant-princess' daughter's dowry—is the pride of the noble Bohemian—celestial pomp—marital felicity—social and political significance of the marriage.

1. Born of the happy connubial union of the holy Prophet and Kedíjeh "the great", conceived in the love, affection and regard of the noble pair, heir to Fátiméh. the great and gentle qualities of her great parents, an embodiment of magnificence and beneficence of the human mind, a delicate personification of moral excellence, purity and chastity, a beautiful bouquet of all that is fragrant, attracting and enchanting in the vast garden of the Universe, polite, polished and embellished, Fátiméh, the Prophet's pet child of the bowels of Khedíjeh, is, by the unanimous appreciation of the Muslim world called "Our Lady of Light". Her life-history fully justifies the appellations: "the Chaste", "the Truthful", "the Queen of Paradise". She is the noble *souvenir* of the princely Khedíjeh to the fair sex, a model of womanly deportment, whom to imitate and emulate has ever been the ambition and aspiration of all Muslim women of all times and all countries.

2. In 2. H. Abú Biker^a applied for her hand and so did Umer bin Khettáb. The Prophet kept silence, pleaded her small age or, according to another Her suitors. version, said that the matter rested with God.

(a) Abú Biker and Umer, afterwards the first and second Caliph respectively.

History has it that when the Prophet mentioned the two applicants to his pious daughter, her face expressed disapproval. There were whispers as to who was likely to secure the great boon of the hand of the Prophet's daughter. Some suggested and Umme Eimen advised Ali to approach the Prophet but he said 'delicacy and respect sealed his lips' on the subject.

3. Under the compelling urge and insistence of a young, yearning heart, Ali, at last, went, entered the house of the Prophet, but found his power of Ali, a suitor. speech gone. A tell-tale face, a visible agitation on the countenance, a confused attitude, probably, enabled Ali's Chief to read his ward's mind that was full of things demanding expression. Mohammed smiled at the flushed face and downcast eyes of the new suitor. Asked if he had anything particular to say Ali began counting the Prophet's favours of which he had the recipient since childhood and his gratitude therefor. At the end of, probably, a floundering, longish tale he submitted his particular request, adding, at the same time, that he had delayed making the request "lest it should be considered disrespectful".

4. The Prophet's wife, Umme Selmeh, was the only other person present on the occasion. On her authority Dower. it is given that the Prophet's face was aglow with joy. He asked Ali as to his means for meeting the nuptial expenses. "I have a sword, an armour and a camel", replied Ali. "The sword for defence, and camel for conveyance", Mohammed thought aloud, "is indispensable"; accordingly he advised Ali to sell the armour to meet the expenses.

5. When the Prophet conveyed to his daughter Ali's request, there appeared a flicker of joyous light on Fátiméh's her face and a shadow of assenting smile acceptance. danced about her virgin lips.

Ali sold his armour for 400 *dirhems* and brought the money to his Chief, who deputed some of the "Companions" to purchase things with the money. When everything was ready the Prophet ordered Bilál, the Negro Crier^b, to call together all the "*Companions*". The dower was fixed at 400 Mithqáls. The marriage was solemnized and the Prophet prayed, "May God keep you from anxieties, may goodness attend your destiny, may you be blessed, may you flourish and be the parents of a large and good progeny". The Prophet then entered his house, prayed again for the couple and gave a hearty send off to his beloved daughter. The bride and the bridegroom started off for their new home under the blessings of their loving parent, the Prophet.

6. A report of marriage in high society is generally held incomplete without a list of marriage presents. Let it be known to the curious that the Prophet Dowry. gave to his daughter—the child of the merchant-princess Khedijeh^c—a covering sheet, a handmill, an iron disc for baking bread upon, two leathern water-bottles, two sets of pillows, one of each set stuffed with

(b) Muezzin or the Crier. Muslims are called to the Mosque by a loud voiced man who shouts twice: Allah is Great, there is no God but Allah, Mohammed is his Prophet, rally to the good, rally to the best of actions, Allah is great; there is no God but Allah. Bilál, a negro freedman of Islam, was the Prophet's Crier or Muezzin.

(c) Ch. 6. P. 1.

cotton and the other with palm-leaves, and two sheep-skin beddings to serve as the nuptial couch.

7. Let not the Philistine twitch the nerves of his sneering face at the scanty list of the dowry, for it is both the pride and the envy of the Noble Bohemian. The parties needed no more and they wished for no more. This was the irreducible minimum for household purposes or they would have gladly repudiated any superfluity. Even a red hot Socialist cannot criticise the list. Ali and Fátiméh were happy in the company of each other and theirs was a resplendent contentment above and beyond material goods and chattels. "Heaven and earth, say the Muslim writers, joined in paying honour to these happy espousals. Medina resounded with festivity and blazed with illuminations and the atmosphere was laden with aromatic odours. As Mohammed on the nuptial night conducted his daughter to her bride-groom, Heaven sent down a celestial pomp to attend her. On her right hand was the Arch-angel Gabriel, on her left was Michael and she was followed by a train of 70,000 angels, who all night kept watch round the mansion of the youthful pair^d.

8. Angels, their existence or participation in human affairs or celebrations may or may not be debateable but if angles do attend men's nuptials, they must have been sent by the good God to attend the marriage of Ali and Fátiméh; the former had given up his ancestral honours and hereditary office, while the latter was the daughter of Khedijeh, the merchant-princess of Mecca who had spent her gold like water in the

(d) Life of Mahomet, by W. Irving.

cause of Allah.

9. Four days after the marital union the Prophet visited Fátiméh in her new home. She was quite enthusiastic about her husband, but casually mentioned the talk of the neighbouring females about her being thrown away upon a poor man. The Prophet talked to her of the worthlessness of worldly goods and assured her that her husband was "the best of men". Then he said to Ali, "If you keep Fátiméh happy, you shall have made me happy".

10. A rich Jew speaking to Ali said that he, the noblest, the bravest and the best of Arabs had tied himself to a poor man's daughter and that had he sought the hand of his (the Jew's) daughter, the camels carrying the dowry would form a solid line from the bride's house to that of her bridegroom. "We look not to lucre but to God's pleasure. We take pride not in worldly wealth but in good deeds", replied Ali.

"Fátiméh was between 15 and 16 years of age, of great beauty, and extolled by Arabian writers as one of the 4 perfect women with whom Allah had deigned to bless the earth. The age of Ali was about 22.^e In deportment, temperament, manners and habits, she took most after the Prophet."^f

11. More space may seem to have been allotted to the narration of a domestic incident than may, perhaps, appear to be necessary, but a

(e) Life of Mahomet, by W. Irving, also see Encyclopædia Britannica. (f) Rauza-tus-Sefá, on the authority of Aiyshéh, the Prophet's wife.

little insight into the tendency of affairs will show that it was more than a mere domestic incident. Fátiméh is the daughter of the noblest family, her father is the *de facto* ruler of the small city-state of Medineh and the head of a fast-spreading religion. A conjunction of circumstances has concentrated in Mohammed social, political and spiritual leadership of the State that is in the making. The power, though small and limited for the present, shows, on account of the tremendous dynamic force within, strong indications of a vast and speedy expansion which is already fairly visible on the horizon. Mohammed is advanced in years and has no son, which means that Fátiméh's progeny will inherit her father's honours. Her husband, therefore, whoever he be, stands a great chance of being important in the near future and hence, perhaps, the anxiety of various people to win her hand in marriage. But apart from the great disparity of ages, the great difficulty for these people is that Fátiméh is too spiritually-minded to be won in wedlock merely for the husband's ulterior purposes. Alí alone is her match. Socially he is the Prophet's equal—two branches of the same tree. Mohammed's political power, present or potential, has arisen out of and is based on the spiritual, and Alí is bred up in Mohammed's ethics. He has done all that lay in his power and all that was necessary to do at all times and on all occasions. He had courageously stood up for Islam on the occasion of "The Call to the kinsmen^h". He had been changing placesⁱ with the Prophet during the seige of Abú Tálíb's castle; he had offered to get himself killed for the Prophet during the

(g) Abú Biker and Umer, (P. 2. Supra) for insance, happned to be about her father's age.

(h) Ch. 9. (i) Ch. 11. P. 10.

night of "the Flight^j" and had braved Meccan fury by staying behind in Mecca to clear el-Amin's accounts^k and save Mohammed's integrity and honest name. The Prophet remembered, too, the great services of Ali's father Abú Tálíb and brother Jafer^l. He well knew the high spiritual level to which Ali, of all his Companions, had attained and, therefore it was that he said, "but for Ali there would be no match for Fátimeh^m.

(j) Ch. 12. 12. (k) Ch. 14. P. 2. (l) Ch. 11. P. 5.
Ch. 20. P. 3.

(m) Menāqeb Murtezwi quoting from Firdaus-ul-Akhbār.

CHAPTER XVII. MUSLIM POSITION.

Early history of Yethreb—the Jews, the Aus, the Khezrij, the Exiles and the Hypocrites—the Pact—Jew's treacherous alliance with the Meccans—Mohammed prepares for self-defence—Jesus and Mohammed,

1. Situated at about eleven days' journey to the north of Mecca, Yethreb is said to have been founded by the Amálegites who were exterminated by its peoples. the Qehtánites, subsequently known as the Khezrij and the Aus. Successive waves of Jews, flying before the Babylonian, the Greek and the Roman, established themselves in northern Hijáz. Living in fortified quarters they dominated the surrounding Arab tribes. The Qehtánites—the Aus and the Khezrij—first reduced to a position of some sort of inferiority succeeded in regaining ascendancy in Yethreb and reducing the Jews to a state of clientage. The Jewish colonies of importance, in and about Yethreb, were of the Bení Nazír, the Bení Qureizeh, the Bení Qeínuqá, besides those at Kheiber and Fedak.

2. The Prophet's influence led the Khezrij and the Aus to cease fighting against each other. It was thus that, after about 120 years' warring, they saw, for the first time, the blessings of peace. The Jews also looked upon Mohammed's movement with favour. He, therefore, sought to secure peace for the people by a pact the terms of which are preserved in history. "In the name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate God", runs the Pact, 'given by Mohammed, the Prophet, to the Believers, whether Meccan or Yeth-

rebite and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, all these shall form one nation', then enacting the *whergeld* and the duties of pious Muslims, the document proceeds. 'The state of peace and war shall be common to all Muslims and none among them shall have the right of concluding peace with or declaring war against the enemies of his co-religionists. The Jews who attach themselves to our Commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations, they shall have an equal right with other people to our assistance and good offices, the Jews of the various branches of Auf, Nejjár, Hárith, Jeshem, Thalebeh and all others domiciled in Yethreb shall form with the Muslims one composite nation; they shall practise their religion as freely as the Muslims; the clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom; the guilty shall be pursued and punished; the Jews shall join the Muslims in defending Yethreb against all enemies, the interior of Yethreb shall be a sacred place for all who accept this charter; the clients and allies of the Muslims and the Jews shall be as respected as the patrons; all true Muslims shall hold in abhorrence every man guilty of crime, injustice or disorder; no one shall uphold the culpable, though he were his nearset kin'. Then after some other provisions regarding the internal management of the State, this extraordinary document concludes thus: 'All future disputes between those who accept this Charter shall be referred, under God, to the Prophet^a,' The Bení Nazír, Qureizeh, Qeínuqá in the suburbs of the town later on accepted the charter and joined the Pact.

(a) Amir Ali's "The Spirit of Islam" (from Ibn Hishám).

This Pact abolished blood-feuds, a recurring cause of devastating Arab wars; it established amicable arbitration instead of referring disputes to the arbitrament of the sword; it organised society on the basis of clear social co-ordination and finally "it constituted Mohammed the Chief magistrate of the nation, as much by his Prophetic function as by a virtual compact between himself and the people°."

3. But the Pact was hardly a month old, when the Jews began reviling the Prophet, mispronouncing the Qurán to render its meaning ridiculous and, The Jews
and the
Hypocrites. contrary to common decency, lampooning Muslim women in the most obscene language. Their "old spirit of rebellion which had led them to crucify their prophets, found vent in open sedition and secret treachery" They put themselves in traitorous communication with the enemies of the little State with which they had entered into a reciprocal pact. Abdullah bin Abi Selúla who found himself deprived of royal honours at Mohammed's advent, became restive at the growing power and popularity of the Prophet and put himself, as the Chief Hypocrite, in communication with the Qureish.

4. The Qureish, who desired Mohammed's death, were threatening invasion, the Munáfíqs and the Jews Mohammed were planning and plotting, treachery and Jesus. "Surrounded by enemies and traitors, Arabia, responding to the call of the Koreish, the ancient servants of the national gods, marching to their slaughter",

(o) Ibid

(p) Ibid.

(q) Ch 15. Footnote (v).

Mohammed saw himself and his Believers face to face with utter destruction. A single city had to stand against the combined attacks of the hordes of Arabia. And Mohammed was not a mere preacher but trustee of the life and liberty of his people. Truly, the situation was such as to compel Mohammed, the preacher, after 13 years of meek forbearance under the cruelest persecution, to resort, as a General of a community on the verge of utter destruction, to the doctrine of self-preservation taught by the Teacher of Nazareth to his Disciples, "Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one^r. Mohammed, however, added to it the proviso "Defend yourself against your enemies, but attack them not first: God hateth the transgressor...The infidels regard not in a Believer either ties of blood or covenant; when they break their oaths of alliance and attack you, *defend* yourselves" And with Mohammed self-defence meant self-preservation.

When war knew no laws, Mohammed humanised it by instructing his soldiery: "Fear God and restrain yourself in your desire. Go in the name of God and for God, seek the help of God and fight like the army of God and of His Prophet. Play no treachery and steal not enemy property; mutilate not the dead. Kill not the old, the children and the females of the enemy, nor the anchorites; do not cut down trees except for necessity. Quarter granted by any of you should be upheld by all of you. Let the protected be in peace, preach to him the Word of

(s) St. Luke XXII. 36.

(t) The Qurán, Sura II. 190.

God, if he adopts your faith he is your brother, or let him depart in peace. Attacking, always remember God. Do not set fire to nor inundate date-trees; never fell down fruit trees, injure not crops nor set them aflame. Do not maim or kill animals except when you kill them for food^t.

(t) Hayát-ul-Qulûb.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE QUREISH INVASION OF MEDINA.

*O'Lord, let not this little band perish, or there will be none to offer
Thee pure worship—the Prophet.*

Medineh—Ashíreh, a punitive expedition—the surname Abú Turáb—Bedr, Alí wins his spurs—Abú Jehl's death—Hasan's birth—Sewíq expedition—Ohod—Abú Sufiyàn—Hypocrites—Hind—Alí's fight—Muslims' desertion—the fourteen defenders—the eight—the two—the solitary defender of Mohammed, Alí—a good-send,—Alí's sword, the Zulfiqár—the Voice: Alí is the soldier, the Zulfiqár is the sword, and there is none other—Fátimèh—Mohammed's appreciation—Ali, the Man—a volunteer—savage Hind and her associates—Hemzeh's death.

1. The Yetherbites changed the name of their ancient city to Medineh-tun-Nebí, the City of the Prophet, or shortly, Medíneh, the City, round Yetherib is Medineh. about which became soon audible rumblings of approaching storm. The Prophet took precautionary measures by sending out, from time to time, small parties for policing the suburban territory and tribes in league with the Qureish. A party under the Prophet's uncle, Hemzeh, and another under the Prophet himself patrolled the territory of the Bení Kedr. Ali bore the Prophet's flag.^u

2. The expedition against the Bení Medlej, known as the Ashíreh, brought Alí the surname Abú Turáb. Having spent a fatiguing time in scouring the country, Ali fell asleep beside a bush. Missing him, the Prophet sent out search parties and then personally joined in the search. Coming upon him, the Prophet aroused him with: "Arise, you Abú Turáb,

(u) Ibn Kheldûn.

(Father of the Earth).” The sleeper arose to find himself dusty all over. The Prophet laughed at him and so did his Companion, Ammár bin Yásir. A soldier, after his tiresome duty, is entitled to have his well-earned nap on any sort of bedding that comes handy, but finding himself the object of search and fun Ali felt funky. There was a childlike simplicity in Ali’s attitude that led to the Prophet’s remark, “the Bení Themúd^v were a bad people who hamstrung the Prophet Sáleh’s dromedary but far worse would be he who harms thee, O Abú Turáb.”^w The surname is Ali’s pet and popular alias still.

3. The Qureish who had sworn to Mohammed’s death did not let grass grow under their feet. They and their heathen allies began raiding the City, Bedr. destroying the fruit-trees and plundering the flocks of the Muslims. The leader of the Hypocrites, Abdullah bin Ubbeiyee and the local Jews encouraged the Qureish who, therefore, marched a force of one thousand well-equipped cavalry and infantry against the City. Goaded on by the unholy zeal of their leader, Abú Jehl, the Father of Ignorance, who had vowed not to drink or annoint his hair till he had exterminated Muslims, they reached Bedr. Ali was deputed by the Prophet to lead the Muslim scouts and watch the enemy. By clever manoeuvring Ali led the enemy’s vanguard to encamp at a place where drinking water was difficult to get. The enemy’s main army also encamped at the place.

The Prophet could produce only 313 men, 97 Muhájers and 216 Ansárs, who possessed among them only 70 riding-camels, two horses, six mail-shirts and 7 swords,

(v) Ch. 3. P. 1.

(w) Tabri and Háyat-ul-Qulüb.

to fight the arrogant and overwhelming numbers of the enemy that had journeyed 11 days to destroy the infant society of the Believers. The Muslims feared the odds, the Prophet saw the danger that threatened to swallow his tiny band. Raising his hands towards Heaven he prayed, "O Lord, forget not Thy promise of assistance. O Lord, let not this little band perish or there will be none to offer Thee pure worship".^x

4. The armies faced each other, the one to defend their City and Faith, the other to destroy both. 'Otbeh bin Rabí, a Qureish chief, his brother Sheibeh Ali's first fight and son Welíd galloped into the open between the two armies. Helmeted and armoured, they challenged the Muslims to single combat. Three Ansárs took up the challenge but the Qureish refused to engage them or any one else except a peer in birth and blood. The Prophet met the demand by sending out 'Obeideh bin Hereth, a seventy years old veteran and Hemzeh, his uncles, and Ali, his cousin. Hemzeh engaged 'Otbeh, 'Odeideh and Ali engaged Sheibeh and Welíd respectively. It was a great combat in which Hemzeh and Ali killed their respective adversaries but the aged 'Obeideh fell under the sword of Sheibeh. Ali ran to his uncle's rescue and despatched Sheibeh. Then ensued general fighting.

It was Ali's first day in the field. By killing the two chief warriors in single combat he had broken the enemy's back. He is reported to have killed in all 36 soldiers out of the enemy's 70 deaths. History has preserved the names of the more important of the Qureish

(x) Ibn Hishám, Ibn Athir, Háyat-ul-Qulúb.

chiefs who fell at Ali's hand: 'Aas bin Sad, Henteleh bin Abú Sufiyán, To míyyeh bin 'Adi, Naufel bin Khálid, Remneh bin Aswed, Umer bin Uthmán, uncle to Telheh bin Abdullah, Uthmán and Málík, brothers of Telheh, and Meina bin Háj, of the Bení Sehem.

Inquiring about the identity of a warrior making for him and being told by an associate that it was Ali, Naufel bin Khálid remarked, "Ali is, verily, the gentlemanliest and finest fighter." One of the Prophet's greatest enemies, Naufel, fought and fell under Ali's hand. The Prophet heard the news and glorifying Heaven said, "Allah is Great."

Abú Jehl died on the field of battle and his unholy vow died with him. It was the first battle of Islam as well as Ali's. It greatly added to Muslim prestige, courage and faith. The enemy fled demoralised, leaving, besides the slain, a large number of captives to be ransomed subsequently.

The battle was fought on Friday, the 18th of the month of Remzán, in the second year of the Hijreh (623-4. A.D.)

5. During the year Ali and Fátiméh got their first child, Hasan, the green-clad "Prince of Peace", who, on Ali's demise, succeeded to the Caliphate. Birth of Hasan Abú Sufiyán's son, Muáwiyyeh, contested it with him. The contest exposed the Ommeyyáde mind and made it clear that Muáwiyyeh's war against Ali, ostensibly for avenging the death of Caliph Uthmán, was a huge fraud and that really he fought for selfish aggrandisement. To bring about peace among Muslims, Hasan renounced the political throne which Muáwiyyeh usurped.

In spite of his peaceableness, Hasan was poisoned to death. The merciless group that hated the idea of joining together the Apostolate and the Caliphate in the same family^y showered arrows on Hasan's coffin to prevent his burial beside the Prophet.

6. The Prophet entrusted the prisoners of Bedr to his people with instructions to treat them well till they arranged to get ransomed. "In pursuance of Prisoners. Mohammed's commands, the citizens of Medina and such of the Refugees as possessed houses received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration. 'Blessings be on the men of Medina! said one of these prisoners in later days; they made us ride while they themselves walked, they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates,'"^z

7. As soon as the ransomed prisoners reached Mecca, Abú Sufiyan, with 200 horses, marched up to the City, murdering men and damaging the date-groves of the Muslims. The Muslims hastily prepared themselves and rushed against the ravagers who took to their heels and dropped down their ration-bags of Sewiq, green grain toasted, pounded and mixed with sugar or dates. The incident is, therefore, derisively called the Sewiq expedition.

8. The idolaters, burning for revenge, were egged on by the implacable hatred of Abú Sufiyan. He himself was constantly spurred on by his wife Hind, Ohod. who knew no rest till the blood of her father,

(y) Ch. 57. P. 2.

(z) Sir W. Muir.

Abú Jehl^a and her son, Hentlehb, killed at Bedr, was fully avenged. Her brother 'Ikremeh, heir to his father's hatred against the Prophet, also clamoured for revenge. Relatives and survivors of those slain at Bedr fanned the flames of war and Mecca flew to arms. Emissaries were sent out who succeeded in obtaining the bedouine assistance of the Beni Tihámeh and Kináneh. Abú Sufiyán marched at the head of 3000 well-equipped soldiers; 700 of them were mailed, 300 rode on camels, 200 were horsemen. Abdullah bin Rabiyyeh, 'Ikremeh bin Abú Jehl and Khálid bin Welíd captained the army. Banners were borne by the Bení Abd-ud-Dár in front, and in the rear followed the virago Hind with the principal females of Mecca, sometimes wailing for the victims of Bedr, sometimes filling the air with the sound of timbrels and war-songs. Abú Sufiyán, the General, marched with his idols in the centre. Reaching Ohod, they began ravaging the suburbs of Medineh.

9. The Prophet marched out of Medineh at the head of 1000 men, of whom 100 wore shirts of mail and two possessed horses. The Jews and the Treachery. Hypocrites, led by Abdullah bin Ubeiyyee, deserted at the last moment, thus reducing the number of the defenders to 700. The Prophet took up his position under the hill and posted some archers, under Abdulleh bin Jubeir, on a height behind the troops, with strict injunctions not to abandon the mouth of the defile under any circumstances. Burton, in his "Pilgrimage to Mecca and al Medina", describes the spot. "This spot... is a shelving strip of land, close to the southern base of mount Ohod. The army of the infidels advanced from

(a) P. 4. *Supra*.

(b) *Ibid*.

fiumara, in crescent shape. It is distant about 3 miles from el Medina in a northerly direction...All that the visitor sees is hard gravelly ground...there is something appalling in the look of the holy mountain. Its seared and jagged flanks rise like masses of iron from the plain and the crevice into which the Muslim host retired, when the disobedience of the archers in hastening to plunder enabled Khálid bin Waleed to fall upon Mohammed's rear, is the only break in the grim wall. Reeking with heat, its surface produces not one green shrub or stunted tree, not a bird or beast appeared on its inhospitable sides, and the bright blue sky glaring above its bald and sullen brow made it look only the more repulsive".

10. The invaders, confident of their numbers, marched down into the plain, with their idols in the centre and Hind, with her Meccan females, chanting their war-songs. "Courage, ye sons of Abd-ud-Dár! Courage, defenders of women, strike home with the edges of your swords; we are the daughters of the Star of the Morn; we tread softly on silken cushions; face the enemy boldly, and we shall press you in our arms; fly and we shall shun you, shun you with disgust."^c

11. The battle began, Telheh bin Abú Telheh, the standard-bearer of the Qureish, came out and challenged Muslims to single combat. The Muslims carried three flags, one each by Sad bin 'Obádeh and Hobáb bin Munzer, while Alí bore the big banner. Alí, therefore, took up Telheh's challenge. The two faced each other. Telheh derided: "Muslim martyrs get Paradise, the non-Muslims go to Hell. I will just now

(c) Ibn Athir.

get you both, martyrdom and Paradise." "Do it in the name of Allah", replied Ali. Blows began brisk, Ali chopped off his adversary's leg who fell to the ground. In the jaws of death he cried, "mercy, my cousin", "And mercy you have", replied Ali, letting him live.^d

12. The first onslaught was repulsed by Muslims under the brave Hemzeh who penetrated right into the enemy's centre. It was a furious fight, the
 The Fourteen enemy retreated in confusion and victory was well-nigh declared for the Muslims who began picking up the booty. Forgetting the Prophet's command, the archers forsook their duty and rushed, too, for the booty. This gave Khálid bin Welid an opportunity. Finding the archers gone, he, with his cavalry, fell on the rear of the Muslims who had to renew the fight against fearful odds. Muslims paid heavily for their error. The intrepid Hemzeh fell and so did many another Muslim warrior. The Prophet fell wounded. Muslims losing sight of their Prophet got disheartened and fled. History mentions only 14 men who held fast to their duty, viz, Abú Biker, Abdur Rehmán bin Auf, Sad bin Abú Waqqás, Zubeir bin Awám, Telheh bin Abdulleh, Abú Obeideh bin Jerráh, Habab bin Munzer, Abú Dujaneh, Athem bin Thábit, Hárith bin Summe, Suhel bin Henif, Sad bin Obádeh, Mohammed bin Selmán and Ali bin Abú Tálib.

13. It was a desperate and tough fight. Six out of the fourteen lost their feet. Abú Biker is reported to
 The Eight. have said, "All left the Prophet on the day of Ohod and of them I was the first to return to

(d) Tabri, Raza-tus-Sefa, Hayát-ul-Qulúb. See also Ch. 8. P. 1.

him, after the battle".^e "I skipped the rocks like a mountain goat and was one of those who left the field," said Umer bin Khettáb, "but Allah fargave me the desertion".^f Uthmán bin Effán escaped to Ureiz, a neighbouring village and returned to Medíneh three days after the battle.^g The names of those who stuck to their duty and the fight for the Faith have been preserved in history, namely, Telheh, Zubeir, Abú Dujáneh, Hárith, Hobáb, Athem, Soheil and Ali.

14. The gallant eight fought; they could, of course, die for the Faith but could not repulse the enemy, nor convert the defeat into victory. Six out of
 The Two. the gallant eight, probably, giving it up as a lost job, thought, perhaps, not without reason, of seeking safety in timely retreat, because, Ali, at one stage, found Abú Dujaneh, the only other man fighting beside him. Abú Dujáneh, too, fell wounded and Ali lifted him to the Prophet.

15. With the prostration of Abú Dujáneh, Ali was left alone to defend the Prophet. Hishám bin Umeyyeh,
 The Solitary Defender. Abdulleh Humhemí, Bashír bin Malik 'Amirí, one after the other, led their men to destroy what Ali fought to preserve. One after the other, the three captains of the assailants fell dead under Ali's powerful arm and yet the men pressed on for the same point. Ali's untiring arm struck blow after blow but the serging waves of the enemy's hordes receded only to advance the more furiously. The Prophet lay wounded and helpless and the Qureish sought to snatch him from

(e) Tàrikh-ul-Khulefà.

(f) Bilâzeri

(g) Rauza tus Sefà.

the protection of the son of Abú Tálib. Abú Tálib was dead but his son lived to keep alive his dead father's words, "...I will never abandon you to your enemies",^h and "...I, hand over my son (Mohammad) to be murdered by you!"ⁱ The Prophet lay wounded and helpless, the Qureish swords enveloped him, even as they had done during the night of the Hijra;^j and fate had once more brought the two cousins, Mohammed and Alí, together. Alí was once again diverting to himself the death^k the Qureish intended to inflict upon Mohammed. How truly and how soon was Alí converting into fact his fancy expressed in his thanksgiving song of the night of the Flight. "At the risk of my life, I saved the life of the greatest and the best of those who ever trod on the Earth or circumambulated round the ancient House of the Black Stone...I engaged in this, merely and solely, to help (the cause of) Allah, and for the future also, I am determined to do the same, till I lie on my pillow in the grave".^l

16. Ali fought and Mohammed saw the fight. A single soldier fighting a whole army; a single arm to stem the onrush of a river in flood. The solitary individual may do his best and utmost, but how long and how far! To a slender thread hung Mohammad's life and hope. Alí, a solitary soldier was fighting like a giant but he was exhausted, wounded and gory all over; a fit of faintness, a slip, a false step, a surprise blow and even this solitary defender would fall and get trampled to death under the very feet of the enemy hordes. And with Alí gone, what comes to Mohammed's life and Mission? Mohammad's life and

(h) Ch. 11. P. 1.

(i) Ch. 11. P. 8.

(j) Ch. 12. P. 3.

(k) Ch. 13. P. 1.

(l) Ch. 13. P. 2

mission hang on Ali's arm. How Mohammed must have prayed and prayed vehemently to his God to give Ali strength, more strength and for ever more; to sustain him in his Titanic task. On Ali's strength depends the life of the Prophet and the existence of Islam.

17. Oh, horror of horrors! Ali's sword snaps into two. The Prophet sees and looks upwards to his God and lo, a sword descends from heaven. Let Zulfiqār. not the sceptic grin and show his teeth at what the ancients describe as a miracle. The sword may have come in any other way but the sword that comes handy under the circumstances is a veritable god-send. The Prophet hands it on to his defender and Ali renews the herculean struggle. A party of Muslims that had been cut off from the Prophet arrived to help Ali take the Prophet to safety on the rocky height of Ohod. They say, the atmosphere resounded with an angelic voice of Heavenly appreciation, "Ali is the soldier, Zulfiqār is the sword, and there is none other"^m

18. Mohammed is safe on the reck; the enemy, too exhausted to press its advantage, effects a retreat. Ali has done his duty; nay, he is to do more. Ali. Wounded and exhausted, he wends his weary steps down the rough heights of Ohod. Having no other vessel for the purpose, he fetches water in the hollow of his shield and washes the wounds of the Prophet who had lost his two front teeth. His consort, Fatimeh, the Prophet's daughter, perturbed at the rumoured death of her father, hurries to the spot. She renders first aid to her father, burns silk cloth and fills the ashes in the

(m) لا فتى الا على لاسيف الاذوالفقار (Lá fetà illa Ali làSeif illa Zulfiqār) Zulfiqār is the name of Ali's sword.

wounds. She is bandaging the wounds but Ali can no longer bear himself up. Exhausted he falls and hands over his blood-stained sword to his consort, saying, "Take it, Fátimeh, the sword is not impure, and I am no coward. Fátimeh, I have sincerely fought for the Prophet and for God's pleasure", to which her august father added, in grateful appreciation. "Take the sword, Fátimeh, your husband has done his duty *well*. The best of the Qureish have fallen under his blows".ⁿ The Prophet embraced Ali".^o

19. The Muslims lost between 60 and 70, while the Qureish lost 30 soldiers, of whom 12 died at Ali's hand.

^{The man.} Sixteen times he staggered to the ground under the enemy blows^p and, in all, received 90 injuries on the head, hands, chest and the lower parts of the body, but all in front^q. While 'Ali lay bed-ridden the Prophet went to see him and said, "Suffering in the path of Allah is its own reward". It touched Ali's heart. With tearful eyes, he replied, "Allah be thanked, that I did not turn my back on you. I wish I had died and become a martyr".

20. Hearing that Abú Sufiyán had threatened to come again, wounded and weak as he was,
^{A Volunteer.} 'Ali offered his services as a volunteer.

The battle of Ohod was fought between the fifth and eleventh of Shewwál, in the third year of the Hijra, on Saturday, (January 626 A. D.)

(n) Siráj-ul-Mubín and Hayât-ul-Qulúb.

(o) Tabrí.

(p) Rauzá-tu-Sefá.

(q) Keshf-ul-Ghumme.

21. Just to show what sort of people the Prophet had to deal with, it may be mentioned that Abú Sufiyán's wife Hind, the daughter of Abú Jehl, did
Hind. not leave the field until she had ripped open Hemzeh's body and eaten up the heart of the dead Háshimite; she, together with her viragos, made and wore bracelets and necklaces of the ears and noses of the slain Muslims.

CHAPTER XIX. HOSTILITY OF THE JEWS.

The Qeinuqa Jews—the Bení Nezír—Ali defends Mohammed—Husain's birth—death of 'Ali's mother—the Musteleq—the False Accusation or Ifek—battle of the Moat—'Ali and the Prophet—'Ali fights 'Amr bin 'Abd Wed—'Ali, Muslims' pet—Mohammed evaluates the fight—'Ali's new chivalry, 'Amr's sister—Maulvi Rûmi's poem—the Qureizeh and Ali's war-song—a courtesy—the treaty of Hudeibeih—Umer's conduct—the Beni Sad—Kheiber—the Flag—the Lover of God and Apostle and their Beloved—a fighter and never a deserter—resigned 'Ali—How long to fight—'Ali's fight—mercy—Aim of life—Fedak.

1. The Jews had business-connections with the Meccans. In sympathy with heathenism, they disfavoured the Apostle of Monotheism. Inspite of the The Qeinuqa. voluntary pact with the Muslim State, they libelled and satirised the head of the State. They ridiculed the Qurán, sang obscene songs to insult Muslim women. They were a disaffected lot of sedition-mongers in communication with the Meccan enemies of the Muslim State. Once a young milk-maid from the country visited the bazar of the Bení Qeinuqá. Loose of morals as they were, the youths of the tribe insulted her. A Muslim passer-by tried to protect her. In the affray that ensued one of the perpetrators of the outrage was killed, the Jews, in retaliation murdered the chivalrous Muslim. Muslims felt enraged. The Jews and the Muslims showed the appearance of an armed camp. To put a stop to this disturbance, Mohammed, personally, went to the tribal quarters, but they insolently replied, "Mohammed, do not be elated on account of the victory

over thy people (the Qureish, at Bedr). Thou hast had an affair with men ignorant of the art of war. If thou art desirous of having any dealings with us, we shall show thee that we are men". They shut themselves up in their fortress which was besieged and reduced in about a fortnight. They were all artisans, possessing not a strip of land and were, therefore, expatriated to Kheiber, in the month of Shewál, 2. A. H. (624 A. D.)

2. Kab bin Ashraf, a distinguished member of the Beni Nezír, bewailing the Qureish losses, had betaken himself to Mecca, and by his elegies on the idolatrous victims of Bedr and satirical verses denouncing the Prophet and the Muslims had roused the Meccans to a frenzy which found vent at Ohod. Abú Ráfe Sallam, another member of the tribe, fomented disturbance among the suburban tribes, the Beni Selím and Ghetfán. For their treachery towards the State they were federated with, under the Pact^s, an Aus Ansár put an end to one, and a Khezrij beheaded another of the Beni Nezír. The expatriation of the Beni Qeinuqá and the death of the two kinsmen, further embittered the Jews.

The weakening of Muslim prestige, on account of the Ohod disaster, led to trouble among the suburban nomads who foraged on Medinite territories, enticed away and murdered the peaceful missionaries of Islam. Seventy preachers were killed at Bír Maúneh, in the territories of the Beni 'Ámir and the Beni Selim. The two survivors of the massacre, on their way to Medineh, found and killed two members of the Beni 'Ámir. As a Medinite had killed, though by way of reprisals, the

justice-loving Prophet held the bereaved families of the innocent wayfarers entitled to compensation, and declared the Medinite State liable for it. The Prophet, personally, went to the Jewish quarters to ask them to contribute towards the payment. Ostensibly agreeing to pay, but planning his death, they asked him to wait a while. Divining their intention from their suspicious movements, the Prophet quietly slipped away. Finding themselves in a false position, the Beni Nazir shut themselves up in a fortress, which was besieged.

3. During the siege, an arrow was shot at the Prophet's tent, at night. Precautions were taken against a night attack, but 'Alí was found missing at the roll-call. The Prophet thought 'Alí to have gone after something important. Search parties were proposed to be sent out but during the discussion 'Alí turned up with a man's head in his hand which he placed at the Prophet's feet, saying, "Sire, it is the head of the man who shot at your tent". Asked to explain his exploit, 'Alí said, "The arrow boded something bigger behind it. I lay in ambush for the warrior who, I thought, must be a brave man and near about. I saw the warrior leading eight others. The others have fled but must be hereabout". The Prophet sent eight men, under 'Alí. The pursuers overtook the men who all fell fighting.

In about a fortnight the besieged sued for peace. Their lives and moveables were granted to them, if they evacuated the territory. They consented. They were disarmed, and the country was rid of the presence of the treacherous traitors. Their lands and warlike materials were distributed, with the Ansárs' consent, among the

Muhájirs who had been deprived of property on account of Islam. This happened in the month of Rabi I, in the fourth year of the Hijra (625 A. D.).

4. During the same year, 'Alí's second son, Husain, was born. A friend congratulating the father, said, "May Birth of Husain. the arrival of the new knight bring you good and happiness." 'Alí instructed, "My friend, say like this, by way of prayer. "Be grateful to the Donor may the gift be a blessing, may the baby ripen to full strength and may you enjoy his goodness."^t Husain is famous as the Martyr, the Hero of Kerbla. The Umemeyyade ambition mercilessly killed Husain and his tiny band of 72 persons for refusing to owe allegiance to the pretensions of Yezid, who had been dishonestly nominated to the Caliphate, by his father Muáwiyyeh bin Abú Sufiyán. Husain and his party bravely fought and fell for the rights of Islam. The blood of the martyr is the seed of the Church. Husain's death, at Kerbla, sounded the death-knell of the Ummeyyádes. Throughout the world of Islam Husain's death is observed, annually as a day of national mourning. The Ummeyyádes are extinct today and even if there be any survivors they dare not own the universally condemned pedigree.

5. In the same year, 'Alí suffered a bereavement in the death of his mother, the noble lady who had Death of 'Alí's mother. mothered Mohammed, the Prophet. The Prophet carried the bier to the graveyard, descended down into the grave, cleared it with his scarf and lay down in it to see if it was commodious and com-

(t) Nehj-ul-Belagheh.

fortable. Then he placed the lady in the grave and buried her with his own hands. On the grave, he prayed for the "mother who was more than a mother."

6. Among the tribes that proved troublesome, after Ohod, were the Beni Musteleq. Receiving news of their warlike preparations, the Prophet forestalled Beni Musteleq. them by marching against them. 'Alí carried the flag of the Muhájirs and felled both the chief of the tribe and its standard-bearer. The enemy suffered defeat.

7. During the expedition a scandal, relevant to this book, arose. The Prophet was accompanied, in the expedition, by his wife, 'Aiyeshah. In the words of Washington Irving, according to the lady's version "the attendants, as usual, brought a camel before the tent of Ayesha and placing the litter on the ground, retired until she could take her seat within it. As she was about to enter, she missed her necklace and returned into the tent to seek it. In the meantime, the attendants lifted the litter upon the camel and strapped it fast, not perceiving that it was empty; she being slender and of little weight. When she returned from seeking the necklace, the camel was gone, and the army was on the march, whereupon she wrapped herself in her mantle and sat down, trusting that, when her absence should be discovered, some persons would be sent back in quest of her. While thus seated, Safwán ibn al Mottel, the young Arab, being one of the rear guard, came up and recognising her, accosted her with the usual Muslim salutation, 'To God we belong, and to God we must return! Wife of the Prophet, why dost thou remain behind, Ayesha did not reply, but drew her veil closer over her face. Safwán, then, alighted, aided her to mount the

Ifek or the
False Accusa-
tion.

camel and taking the bridle, hastened to rejoin the army. The Sun had risen before he overtook it, just without the walls of Medina. This account given by Ayesha, and attested by Safwán ibn al Mottel, was satisfactory to her parents and particular friends, but was scoffed at by Abdullah^u and his adherents, 'the hypocrites'. The story was eagerly caught up and circulated,...and was celebrated in satirical verses...Mohammed was sorely troubled in mind and asked counsel of Ali in his perplexity. The latter made light of the affair, adding that instead of taking it to heart 'he could marry another and many a woman would be ready to wed him^w' or institute an inquiry. The charge against her was, on inquiry, proved false but she began hating 'Alí; and "the hatred thus implanted in her bosom was manifested, to his great detriment in many of the most important concerns of his after life".^x

8. The Beni Nazir, banished from their homes,^y did not sit listless. They enlisted the sympathy of their The Battle of brethren of Kheiber and succeeded in forming the Moat. ing a formidable coalition with the Qureish and the Bedouines. An army of 10,000 men, under the command of Abú Sufiyán, marched on Medineh. The Prophet could muster only 3,000 men against the allied forces. After Ohod, it was not advisable to meet the enemy in the open. The Muslim army encamped outside the City and, at the suggestion of Selmán, the Persian *savant* dug a moat in front of them. The enemy marched

(u) Ch. 15. Foot note (y).

(w) The Life of Mahomet, by W. Irving, also Tabri and Rauza tus Sefá.

(x) W. Irving.

(y) P. 3. Supra.

to the moat. The two armies lay encamped across it. False to their pact^z with the Muslims, the Bení Qureizeh, who possessed fortified places near the City, opened treacherous negotiations with the enemy. It was a grave situation but there was quite a sensation when five Qureish horsemen leaped over the moat, at a narrow spot and challenged the Muslims to single combat. This party, consisting of 'Ikrimah bin Abú Jehl, Huweireh bin Abú Weheb, Naufl bin 'Abdullah and Zerár bin Khettáb, was led by 'Amr bin 'Abd Wed, a famous warrior, who was out to avenge the injury his name and person had suffered at Bedr. The disparity of the numbers of the two armies, the seditionist "Hypocrites" within, the traitorous Bení Qureizeh about the City and the memory of Ohod, already weighed heavy on the Muslims; the sudden breach in their wall of safety, the moat, and the appearance of one of the best-known warriors of the country demoralised the defenders into "drooping their heads and stand sapless".^a Umer bin Khettáb, knowing 'Amr's prowess recounted an incident to which he had been an eye-witness in a caravan attacked and looted by a gang of marauders, how 'Amr, being one of the caravan, had taken up a camel's young to serve both as shield and mace, and how single-handed he had repulsed, pursued the gang of several hundred marauders and recovered the booty as well.^b This tale further sapped the defenders. Thrice did 'Amr shout his challenge and thrice did 'Alí offer to accept it. "Is the camp devoid of men", at last taunte the idolater. 'Alí and 'Alí alone stood up again, undaunted. The Prophet gave 'Alí his own sword and armour, placed his own turban on 'Alí's head and

(z) Ch. 17. P. 2.

(a) Rauzá-tus-Safá. (b) Ibid.

sent him against the bravest knight of Arabia. As 'Ali went, the Prophet said, "entire Belief is going to encounter entire Un-Belief." Then lifting up his hands to Heaven, he prayed, "My Lord! Thou hast called to Thee 'Obeideh^c at Bedr and Hemzehl^d at Ohod; 'Ali alone now remains with me. Succour him now with Thy assistance"

Facing 'Amr, 'Ali asked, "Is it you who claim to grant, at least, one out of any three requests made to you by any body?"

8. "Yes", was the reply of the great warrior. "Then, I request you to accept Islam", said 'Ali.
Islam's soldier "Not granted", was 'Amr's reply.

"Then go back and meddle not with the Prophet".

"Not granted", said 'Amr, "Qureish females shall sing my satires and chant me lampoons at the tambourine. Besides, why should I let go the opportunity my vow".^e

"I am on foot and you ride a horse", said 'Ali, "unhorse yourself and give me an equal fight".

"I grant you this", replied 'Amr, but added, "my nephew! your father was my friend. I loathe to spill your blood. You are, besides, too young to cross swords with veterans. Go back, I never expected Muslims to sneak behind a raw youth like yourself."

(c) Ch. 18. P. 4. (d) Ch. 18. P. 21.

(e) Wounded at Bedr, he had vowed never to annoint his hair or perfume his person till his wounds were avenged.

9. "But," said 'Alí, "I do intend killing you". 'Amr felt irate and insulted; true to his word, he not only alighted from his steed but hamstrung it.

'Alí and 'Amr The fight began, 70 sword-blows were delivered and parried. 'Amr's blow fell heavy on 'Alí's head. He staggered but, regathering himself, returned the blow so dextrously as to be able to shout his usual '*Takbir*' (Allah is great). The two armies had watched the fight. Dust under the feet had risen and enveloped the fighters. It subsided, the atmosphere cleared to show 'Alí bandaging his head and the brave 'Amr lying headless in the field. The Muslim camp, that was watching with bated breath and strained nerves, shouted joyfully. Hardly had 'Alí bandaged his head when Huweireh bin Abú Weheb and Zerár bin Khettáb rushed together at the tired soldier of Islam. Zerár's heart failed him and he took to his heels; Huweireh persisted longer but, in a while, followed Zerár. Naufel, too, ran but trying to leap back leaped short and fell in the moat. Muslims began stoning him. On his protesting against the unsoldierly conduct 'Alí arrived, jumped down the moat and sworded him to death.

10. The siege had already lasted for more than a fortnight, some of the allied tribes had marched against

Medineh expecting an easy job and a lot of loot. The inordinate length of the siege, their mutual suspicions and the death of their greatest soldier, demoralised the invaders. A freezing windstorm and heavy rain broke their tent-ropes, extinguished the camp fires; man and beast could find no shelter. It aroused their superstitions and thinking that Mohammed had set the elements against them, the enemy dispersed under cover of the night.

11. 'Alī brought 'Amr's head and laid it at the Prophets' feet. Abū Biker and Umer bin Khettāb enthusiastically kissed his forehead in grateful appreciation of his invaluable achievement.^f

12. The Prophet, who had anxiously said, regarding 'Alī's outward march, "Entire Belief is going to encounter entire Unbelief", said, on 'Alī's victorious return, "Alī's fight on the day of the Moat is weightier than the best deeds of all Muslims of all times."

13. Under Arab custom the victor was entitled to all on the victim's person. 'Amr's sister came to her dead brother and found him wearing the precious armour, famous for its value and quality. Appreciating the victor's courtesy, hitherto unknown in the land, she said, "Verily, he has fallen at the hand of some noble adversary." Being told that he had fallen at 'Alī's hand, she extemporised two verses, "Had he fallen at another's hand I would have wept for him till eternity. But he has been killed by one whose lineage is blameless and whose father has always been called "the Chief (the light) of the City".

14. Another beautiful incident has been versified by Maulanā Jalāl ud Din Rūmi in his immortal Masnewī.

As 'Alī was bowing over 'Amr's prostrate body to behead him, the heathen spat at the godly face of Islam's soldier, who "is the pride of all Apostles and saints". Ali at once let go the adversary, who rose to renew the fight. Asked the reason of taking the great risk involved in releasing so dangerous a foe,

(f) Rauzā-tus-Sefā.

,Ali explained, that the spitting had angered him and because man could be killed *for* Allah alone, he had, by his action, avoided allowing the least alloy of personal feelings to debase the purity of his act. He had run the great risk but killed the man only when the renewed fight had suppressed all personal feelings and "my action always coincides with my theory."

15. The battle is known as the Battle of Khenddeq or the Moat, and was fought in 5 H=627 A. D. The treachery of the Bení Qureizeh^g deserved condign punishment. The tribe, conscious of its guilt, planned a surprise attack. At the news of the preparations, the Prophet forestalled the design by laying a siege. 'Ali, as usual, was the Prophet's standard bearer and marched ahead. In front of the tribal fortress, the Muslim soldiery sang, to overawe the besieged, "Comes the conquerer of 'Amr". But 'Ali was of a different stuff. He hated all grandiose and self-praise. He had already sung, "I engaged in this, merely and solely, to help (the cause of) Allah",^h and, therefore, in response to the song of the soldiery, he sang, now, "Thanked be Allah. Islam is made manifest and darkness of heathenism evanescent".

16. The besieged shouted vituperations from the ramparts. Leaving the banner with an Ansár chief 'Ali ran to the Prophet, to request him not to come near the fort of men who would shortly receive due punishment. The Prophet understood the delicacy of the request and asked, "Do they speak ill of me". Replying in the affirmative, 'Ali returned to his

post. The fort surrendered in 25 days and the traitors were duely punished.

17. For six years the Prophet and his Meccan Companions had been in exile. With a few of the Faithful, the Prophet set out for performing the Pilgrimage. The Kabeh belonged to the Arab nation, the Qureish were merely custodians of the temple. According to the custom of the nation, all war ceased during the "month of the Pilgrimage" and even enemies could meet at the national sanctuary. In order to set at rest any misgivings, the Muslims travelled without arms and yet the Meccans obstructed the Muslims' approach to the house of national worship.

The Qureish arrested the envoy who was sent to assure them of the Muslims' intentions. To avoid friction, the Prophet desired 'Umer bin Khettáb to see the Qureish, as an envoy, but pleading his want of influence in the town and apprehending personal violence, he suggested 'Uthmán's name. 'Uthmán went and was arrested. The Qureish blocked all inlets into the town and showered stones and arrows at the Prophet. For the sanctity of the town and for avoiding a sacrilegious war during the 'month of the Pilgrimage, the Prophet expressed willingness to agree to any terms of the Qureish. A treaty, accordingly, was concluded at Hudeibieh, whereby all hostilities between the parties were to cease; persons coming over to the Muslims, without the assent of the Qureish, were to sent back, the Qureish were not to reciprocate the term in the case of persons so leaving the Muslims; either party was to be free to secure alliances with the tribes; the Muslims were to go back without performing the Pilgrimage but

could do so in the following year.

'Ali, as the Prophet's secretray, reduced the treaty into writing. As he wrote, "This is a treaty concluded between Mohammed, Gods Apostle and the Qureish, the latter objected to the designation. The unbelieving Qureish were right in insisting on getting the description expunged from the draft; 'Ali, believing in Mohammed's Apostolate, could not possibly erase it. The justice-loving Prophet cancelled the words with his own hands.¹

After 11 days' march, to retrace their steps without performing the Pilgrimage was a sore trial for the Muslims. 'Umer bin Khettáb could not repress the query, in the words of Abú'l Fidá, "Are you not the Prophet", The sceptical outburst apart, Mohammed's moderation and magnanimity had, by the treaty, ended, for ten years, the constant state of war between the Muslims and the Qureish. 'Umar, too, repented for his rudeness and atoned for it by sacrificing several camels.

18. Some of the Bedouins mistaking, like the Muslims,^j the Prophet's clemency for weakness, became restive. The Beni Sad joined with the hostile
Beni Sad Jews of Kheiber. 'Ali led an expedition against them but the tribe vanished into the desert.

19. About 5 days' journey, to the north-east of

(i) It is curious that 30 years, later, 'Ali as the Prophet's Caliph, met with a similar objection on the part of the present Qureish leader, Abú Sufiyán's son, Muawiyeh, who objected to Ali being described as Caliph, in the treaty that was being written on the field of Siffín (Ch. 84. P. 11.)

(j) P. 17. Supra.

Medina, lay Kheiber, a rich territory of the Jews who had always been scheming and planning against Kheiber. Islam. The Bení Nazír^k and the Bení Qureizeh^l fanned the flames of hostility against Islam, with the result that the Jews formed a strong coalition with the bedouine hordes of the Bení Ghetfán etc and ceaselessly worked for securing more allies. Accordingly, early in the month of Moharram, 17 H. (628-629 A. D.), the Prophet forestalled the intentions of the coalition by marching against Kheiber, at the head of 1200 foot and 200 horse. It was a strongly fortified locality studded with several castles. One after the other the castles fell till the Muslims appeared before the strongest fortress, el Qemús, in the city of Kheiber. "It was strongly defended by outworks and its citadel, Al Kamús, built on a steep rock, was deemed impregnable, inso much that Kenana ibn al Rabi, the chief or King of the nation, had made it the depository of all his treasures. The siege of the city was the most important enterprise the Muslims had yet undertaken. When Mohammed first came in sight of its strong and frowning walls and its rock-built citadel, he is said to have put up the following prayer: 'O Allah...To Thee we look for aid against this people and against all the perils by which we are environed'. The siege of the citadel lasted for some time, and tasked the skill and patience of Mohammed and his troops, as yet but little practised in the attack of fortified places. They suffered, too, from want of provisions. The besiegers protected themselves by trenches and brought battering rams to play upon the walls. Abú Biker, at one time, led the assault but...was compelled

(k) Ch. 18. P. 2.

(l) Ch. 18. P. 5.

to retreat. The next attack was headed by Omer bin Khettáb with no better success".^m

20. The Prophet was indisposed, the siege could not be continued indefinitely and retreat, without a decisive issue, was out of the question. At repeated retreats of his captains, the Prophet said, "Now I shall give my Standard to one, who loves God and His Prophet, and whom God and His Prophet love; the one who is a fighter and never a deserter".

21. It was a night of great hopes and expectations in the Muslim camp. The Prophet had left the candidate unnamed. Military honour apart, the Muslims longed for it because of the great attributes the Standard-bearer was authoritatively described to possess. Eligibles longed to bear the banner and the minor fry longed to know the happy possessor of true love for God and His Prophet, and who was, in turn, loved by God and His Prophet. How the Muslim warriors must have prayed for the boon! Umer bin Khettáb is reported to have said, "Never have I wished for honour so strongly as I did on the occasion". Sad bin Abú Weqqás brought himself before the Prophet and thumped himself down on his knees to draw the Prophet's attention. Such a display of nervousness to attract attention was the outcome of exuberant desire. A General, in allotting military commands and, particularly, in cases of importance, never forgets his captains, nor does he stand in need of being reminded of their presence in such awkward modes. A General, in allotting commands, always begins by making an estimate of the military

(m) Life of Mahomet by W. Irving. Tabri, Jerír, Rauza-tus-sefa and Abul Fida.

situation and then selecting the best of his officers to deal with it; and the General is not worth the name who does not know his men and their mentality.

22. The Prophet came out of his tent and, with the envied banner in his hand, stood before his men. 'Ali was not among them. With sore eyes, he sat in his tent saying, with regard to the great banner, "My God! none can get but what You will, and naught can withhold the gift that you will for any of your servants".

23. The Prophet surveyed his forces, rank and file, and asked, "where is 'Ali?" 'Ali's ailment had encouraged hope in the heart of many a candidate; the Prophet's demand for 'Ali must have tended to extinguish many a man's hope for the honour; and 'Ali's disability must have rekindled the dying flame of hope in many a breast. Voices replied to the Prophet's query, "Prophet of God! 'Ali is not in the field, he has sore eyes and cannot see". But the Prophet ordered for 'Ali's presence. 'Ali came and was instantaneously cured of his ailment. Faith, the Prophet's prayer, the stimulating action of a fight ahead, or the psychological effect of the bestowal of the banner which proclaimed the possession of great spiritual attributes, or, as the historians say, the application by the Prophet of his saliva to the ailing eyes, whatever cured him, God-and-Prophet-loving 'Ali, the loved of Allah and His Apostle, took the banner and went to the battle. "Fighter and never a deserter" as he was and as he was authoritatively declared to be, he took up the banner and marched forth, but before marching on, 'Ali asked, as 'Ali alone could ask, "Prophet of God; how long

should I fight". "Till they profess their faith in the Unity of God", instructed the good General, "if your efforts can bring to the Path of Guidance one single individual, it shall be a greater charity than the giving away of a thousand red camels".

24. The standard-bearer of the Unity of God, deputed by the Prophet of God, turned about and marched straight on to the great gate of el-Qemús, the impregnable fortress of the Jews and the stronghold of idolatrous Judaism, and stuck his banner in the rocky ground of Kheiber. "He was clad...in a scarlet vest, over which was buckled a cuirass of steel. Scrambling with his followers up the great heap of stones and rubbish in front of the breach, he planted his standard on the top, determined never to recede until the citadel was taken. The Jews sallied forth to drive down the assailants. In the conflict which ensued, Ali fought hand to hand with the Jewish commander, el Hárath, whom he slew. The brother of the slain advanced to avenge his death. He was of gigantic stature, with a double cuirass, a double turban wound round a helmet of proof, in front of which sparkled an immense diamond. He had a sword girt to each side and brandished a three-pronged spear, like a trident. The warriors measured each other with the eye and accosted each other in boasting Oriental style.

'T', said the Jew, 'am Marhab; armed at all points, and terrible in battle,

'And I am 'Ali, whom his mother, at his birth, sur-named Al-Haidar'. Blows were struck and dexterously parried till Marhab fell at the hands of Ali".^a

(n) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

25. The two deaths demoralised the Jews who now retired behind the walls, and the fortress was stormed and taken. The garrison cried for quarter and Mercy.

'Ali at once stayed his powerful arm. Muslims occupied the fortress. 'Ali presented himself before the Prophet who kissed his eyes and forehead, saying, "I am informed of your fruitful effort and great bravery. I am pleased and my God is pleased with you". History makes tears fill 'Ali's eyes and, also, a few of them drip down to his cheeks. "Are these the tears of grief or of joy"? queried the Prophet. "What", replied 'Ali, "can cause greater joy than God's pleasure and that of His Apostle"!

26. Unmindful of personal comforts and ailments at duty's call, absolutely resigned to the will of the Almighty, invincible in battle, his irresistible Aim of Life, hand ceasing its warlike operations at the vanquished foe's first cry for mercy, his heart of steel melting into tears at the mention of God's name, not rewards or military fame but God's pleasure and that of his Apostle compensating him for all the risks run and perils undergone, verily a wondrous combination of great and variant qualities is 'Ali. Kheiber illustrates 'Ali's past and anticipates his future. The goal of his life and the aim of his efforts could well be summed up in the Prophet's great phrase "Gods' pleasure".

27. The fate of Kheiber showed to the other Jewish tribes the futility of fighting the ever-successful arms of Islam and the advisability of entering into treaty with the Prophet. Some of these sued for Muslim alliance and were granted their desire, others continued recalcitrant. Expeditions were sent against Fedak.

them. One such expedition was against the Beni Nazir, of Fedak, in the vicinity of Kheiber. The tribe surrendered without fighting and betook themselves from the territory.

28. According the law of Islam, property acquired by fighting is, reserving one-fifth for public purposes, distributed among the fighters, but property Feiy acquired without actual fighting does not go to the soldiery but vests in the Prophet, to be distributed, at his discretion, amongst the deserving. This property, in the Quranic terminology, is called Feiy.^o

Out of the property acquired, not by the fighting soldiery but by the sheer prestige of Islam, now that it was possible to make some compensation to the im-

(o) The law on the point is laid down in the Quran (Ch. LIX Part XXVIII, surnamed el Hashr v. 6-9).

6. And whatever Allah restored to His Apostle from them, you did not press forward against it any horse or riding-camel, but Allah gives authority to His Apostles against whom he pleases and Allah has power over all things.
7. Whatever Allah has restored to His Apostle from the people of the towns, it is for *Allah* and for the *Apostle* and for the *near of kin* and the *orphans* and the *needy* and the *wayfarer*, so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you. Whatever the Apostle gives you accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is severe in retributing (evil).
8. (It is) for the poor who *fled*, those who were *driven from home and their possessions*, seeking grace of Allah and His pleasure, and *assisting Allah and His Apostle*....
9. And those who made their *abode in the City* and in the faith before them, love those who fled to *them*.

poverished benefactors of the Faith, the Prophet, in his justiceful discretion, gifted a portion of Fedak to his pious daughter, Fátimeh,^p who was "near of kin", "needy", "driven from her home and possessions" of Mecca, and whose fabulously rich^q mother's estate had, during her minority, all been spent in assisting Allah and His Apostle. The Prophet had, already, gifted to other Mehájers the property of the Beni Nazir,^r. The gift is said to have been made, under the Quránic verse, "And give to the near of kin his due" al-Qurán, Ch XVII, part XV, (Surnamed the Beni Isráíl) verse, 26.

(p) Rauza tus Sefa, Medârej un Nebuwvveh.

(q) Ch. 6. P. 1. (r) Ch. 18. P.P. 2-3,

CHAPTER XX.

THE QUREISH AND THEIR ALLIES, THE BEDOUINS.

The Pilgrim Prophet—Mûteh—death of Jáfer bin Abû Tàlib—the Qureish versus the Khuzà—'Alí saves a military secret—Abû Sufiyàn, 'Alí, his wife and sons—Abû Sufiyàn's capture and conversion—'Abbás and 'Umer—the Fall of Mecca—'Ali, the Captain of Peace—a peaceful entry—men and idols—'Ali on Mohammed's shoulders to destroy idols—purifying the Kabeh, his birth-place—Abraham's sons and prayer—Mohammed's Sermon on the Mount—Khàlid's vengeance. 'Ali saves the Prophet's name—the Prophet's and the tribe's gratitude.

1. Under the terms of the previous year's treaty of Hudeibieh the Prophet started, towards the end of 7 H. for the Meccan Pilgrimage. The Qureish would fain have gone back upon the treaty but the Muslims reassured them by laying aside their arms. Not liking, however, to hold any converse with the pilgrims they evacuated the city for the 3 days of the ceremony. "It was surely a strange sight", says Muir, with an unconscious thrill, "which at this time presented itself in the vale of Mekka, a sight unique in the history of the world. The ancient city is for 3 days evacuated by all its inhabitants, high and low, every house deserted; and as they retire, the exiled converts, many years banished from their birth-place, approach in a great body, accompanied by their allies, revisit the empty homes of their childhood and, within the short allotted space, fulfil the rites of pilgrimage. The inhabitants, climbing the heights around, take refuge under tents or other shelter among the hills and glens and clustering on the overhanging peack of Abu-Kubeys, thence watch the movements of the visitors beneath, as, with the Prophet at their head, they make the circuit of the Kaabeh

and the rapid procession between es-Sefâ and Marwah, and anxiously scan every figure if perchance they may recognise among the worshippers some long lost friend or relative. It was a scene rendered possible only by the throes which gave birth to Islam".^s And how much had 'Alî done for making the scene possible; and it was not so much a scene as an accomplishment. It affected the heart of many of the Qureish onlookers. The self-restraint and scrupulous regard for the terms of the treaty brought, from amongst the Qureish, many a new convert to Islam, for instance, Khâlid bin Welîd, who commanded the Qureish cavalry at Ohod, and 'Amr bin 'Aas.

2. After the treaty of Hudeibieh, the Prophet had sent envoys to invite the neighbouring sovereigns to Islam. The Greek Emperor Heraclius showed Mûteh. conventional courtesy to the envoy but Perwiz, of Persia, was supercilious and tore down the Prophet's letter to pieces. The envoy to the Ghessânide prince of Busra (near Damascus and a feudatory of Heraclius) was cruelly murdered by a kinsman of the prince. This outrage on ambassadorial etiquette necessitated a punitive expedition. The Byzantine authorities, instead of disavowing the crime, made the quarrel imperial and attacked the Muslim forces (300) near Mûteh, in Syria. The Muslims repulsed them but the battle remained indecisive because, unable to press their advantage, the Muslims had to retreat before superior numbers of the enemy.

3. The expedition was led by the Prophet's freed-man, Zeid, with whom were associated the Prophet's

[s] The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali,

cousin, Jafer^t bin Abú Tálib ('Ali's brother),
 Death of Jafer "in the prime of life and noted for his great
 courage and manly beauty," Abdullah, and the new
 proselyte, Khálid bin Welid.^u Zeid fell fighting and the
 falling banner was seized by Jafer. The battle thickened
 round him and he fought with desperate valour. His
 hand that held the banner was chopped off but Jafer
 held aloft the banner of Islam, in the other. This, too,
 was struck off and Jafer embraced the banner with his
 crippled arms till a fatal blow cleft his skull and felled
 him. Khálid took up the standard, finished the fight
 and routed the enemy. Jafer's body was found among
 the slain, covered over with wounds, all in front. "Out
 of respect to his valour and to his relationship with the
 Prophet, Khálid ordered that his corpse should be borne
 back for honourable interment at Medina. The army,
 on its return, though laden with spoil, entered the city
 more like a funeral train than a triumphant pageant,
 and was received with mingled shouts and lamentations.
 All bewailed the fate of Jafer, brought home a ghastly
 corpse to that city whence they had so recently seen him
 sally forth in all the pride of valiant manhood, the admi-
 ration of every beholder".^v The Prophet shed "the
 tears of friendship over the lost friend" and said that in
 Paradise he soared on angelic wings—Divine gift to
 compensate for the lost arms.

At about the same time, during the eighth year of
 the Hijra (629-630 A. D.), the Qureish, in disregard of the
 treaty of Hudeibíeh, wantonly attacked and murdered
 some of the Bení Khuzá. Being in alliance with the

(t) Ch. 11. PP, 3,5 (u) P. 1. Supra

(v) Life of Mahomet, by W, Irving.

Muslims, the Khuzá appealed to the Prophet who at once prepared for retaliation.

4. The preparations were kept strictly secret. Háteb bin Abú Belteh, whose family at Mecca was alone
 A military secret. and unprotected, sought the Meccans' favour by sending them timely news of the Medinite preparations. He sent his letter through a slave-girl of Mecca who was on a visit to Medineh. Apprised of it, the Prophet sent after her a party, of which 'Alí was one, to intercept the letter. They overtook her but searched her in vain and were for releasing her "but Ali was confident that the Prophet of God could not be mistaken. Drawing his scimitar he swore to strike off the head of the messenger unless the letter was produced. The threat was effective. She drew forth the letter from her hair".^w The Prophet's secret was thus kept from the Qureish.

5. "The Koreishites had by this time learned to appreciate and dread the rapidly increasing power of the 'Alí and Abú Muslims, and were eager to explain away, or Sufiyan. atone for, the quarrels and misdeeds of a few heedless individuals. They even prevailed upon their leader, Abu Sufiyan, to repair to Medina as ambassador of peace. It was a sore trial to this haughty chief to come, almost, a suppliant to the man whom he had scoffed at as an imposter and treated with inveterate hostility, and his proud spirit was doomed to still further mortification, for Mahomet...vouchsafed him no reply. Repressing his rage Abu Sufiyan sought the inter-mediation of Abu Beker, Umer and Ali but they all rebuked and repulsed him. He next endeavoured to secure the

(w) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

favour of Fátimeh, the daughter of Mahomet and wife of Ali, by flattering a mother's pride, entreating her to let her son Hasan, a child but six years old, be his protector, but Fátimeh answered haughtily, "my son is too young to be a protector; no protection can avail against the Prophet of God". He now turned again to Ali, beseeching his advice in the desperate state of his embassy. 'I can advise nothing better', replied Ali, 'than for thee to promise, as the head of the Koreishites, a continuance of the protection, and then to return to thy home'. 'But think-est thou that promise will be of any avail'. I think not', replied Ali dryly, 'but I know not to the contrary'. In pursuance of this advice, Abu Sufian, repaired to the mosque, and made public declaration, on behalf of the Koreishites, that on their part the treaty of peace should be faithfully maintained; after which he returned to Mecca, deeply humiliated by imperfect result of his mission. He was received with scoffs by the Koreishites who observed that his declaration of peace availed nothing without the concurrence of Mohammet".^x

6. At the head of ten thousand men the Prophet marched against Mecca. The secret of the expedition Abú Sufián's was so well kept that the Muslim army conversion. biovuaced near the sacred city without the Meccans knowing anything of it. The Prophet's uncle 'Abbás found, on his rounds at night, a scouting party escorting in two prisoners, one of whom was no other than Abú Sufián himself. Umer sought to behead the prisoner but 'Abbás took him under his protection, pending the Prophet's decision. The Prophet approved of his uncle's action and let the prisoners be in his charge till

(x) Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

the following day. When produced before him at the appointed time the Prophet said, "well, Abu Sufian, is it not at length time to know that there is no other God but God". 'That I already know', replied Abu Sufian. 'Good! and is it not time for thee to acknowledge me as the Apostle of God'. 'Dearer are thee to me than my father and my mother', replied Abu Sufian, using an Oriental phrase of compliment, 'but I am not yet prepared to acknowledge thee a prophet'. 'Out upon thee', cried Omer, 'testify instantly to the truth or thy head shall be severed from thy body'. To these threats were added the counsels and entreaties of al Abbas, who showed himself a real friend in need. The rancour of Abu Sufian had already been partly subdued by the unexpected mildness of Mahomet; so, making a merit of necessity he acknowledged the divinity of his mission".^y

7. Abú Sufiyan now stood with 'Abbás to see the Muslim army's march. He was surprised at the number, The Full of Mecca. discipline and equipment of the troops. 'Abbás advised him, "return then to thy people; provide for their safety and warn them not to oppose the Apostle of God". Abú Sufiyan went and advised the Meccans accordingly.

The Prophet marched on to Mecca with military caution, spreading out detachments on all sides. "To Ali, who commanded a large body of cavalry was confided the sacred banner. Express orders were given to all the generals to practise forbearance and in no instance to make the first attack, for it was the earnest desire of Mahomet to win Mecca by moderation and clemency

rather than subdue it by violence".^z The Prophet approached the city unresisted, except for a shower of arrows in one part of the town. Before entering the city the Prophet put off his garments and assumed those of a pilgrim and entered the city of his birth and persecution "with the glory of a conquerer but the garb and humility of a pilgrim...He triumphed in the spirit of a religious zealot not of a warrior".^a

8. So solicitous of maintaining peaceful atmosphere was the Prophet that when the Ansár chief, Sad bin The Prophet's 'Obádeh, beholding Abú Sufiyán, threw out lieutenant. the challenge, "O Abú Hentleh! what a day for a fight!" and shouted out to the Medinites to avenge the deaths of their kinsmen. Abú Sufiyán, fearing general massacre, ran to the Prophet, the latter, at once, transferred from Sad the Ansár banner also to the bearer of the big banner 'Alí who well understanding the Prophet's clement policy, peacefully led the army into the city.^b

9. "The city which had treated him so cruelly, driven him and his faithful band for refuge amongst strangers, which had sworn to take his life and the Clemency. lives of his devoted disciples, lay at his feet. His old persecutors, relentless and ruthless, who had disgraced humanity by inflicting cruel outrages upon inoffensive men and women and even upon the lifeless dead, were now completely at his mercy. But in the hour of triumph every evil suffered was forgotten, every injury inflicted was forgiven and a general amnesty was extended to the population, of Mecca. Only four criminals

(z) Ibid. (a) Ibid. (b) Hayát-ul-Qulûb.

whom justice condemned made up Mohammed's proscription list when he entered as a conqueror in the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example and entered gently and peaceably; no house was robbed, no woman was insulted. Most truly has it been said that through all the annals of conquest there has been no triumphant entry like unto this".^c

10. Mecca, the centre of idolatry, had fought and intrigued against the Prophet's mission, its hostility was Mohammed the fight of superstition against the new in- and Ali. tellectualism. Mecca, that had been fighting for idolatry and against God, had fallen. Mecca, the city, was granted amnesty and enjoyed undisturbed peace but Mecca, the centre of idolatry met a devastation complete and eternal. The Prophet entered the Kabeh and pulled down the stone-gods that defiled the sanctuary of Abraham and Ishmael. One by one the idols fell and broke. The Meccans looked aghast at the destruction of their idols which were held so potent but now proved so helpless. There were idols perched higher up, beyond the reach of man and therefore invested with more majesty. Did the Prophet call for ladders or long hooks to pull them down? Did he order his forces to reach and fell them? No, he did nothing of the sort. The Prophet made a ladder of himself and asked 'Ali to rise high on his shoulders and pull down the idols from their high pedestals. 'Ali hesitated, out of respect for the Prophet's person, but obeyed the repeated command. The idols were destroyed. God's work must be done by one who had never worshipped the idols that had to be destroyed. Had not 'Ali, from early life, dedicated himself to

(c) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

the work and worship of God and to the popularisation of His religion? Look, therefore, at the feet whereupon had 'Ali stood to respond to the Prophet's appeal for assistance on the occasion of the "Call to the Kinsmen",^d the feet that had spread under the Prophet's coverlet, during the night of the Fight^e and then conducted him into voluntary exile to the City of the Prophet,^f the feet that stood firmly by the Prophet on the difficult field of Ohod,^g the feet which advanced to meet the enemy when others' feet felt fidgety in fright in the battle of the "Moat,"^h the feet which remained firm in front of Kheiberⁱ where other feet had staggered into retreat, look at the very same feet of 'Ali that were, at the bidding of the Prophet, supporting him on the shoulders of the Apostle of God to do the Divine deed of destroying the idols. Cousins by consanguinity and brothers in spirit, the two must have felt the joy of a common achievement, for doing God's work in the Kabeh they became communicative. "Ali" asked the Prophet from underneath his burden, "how do you feel up there on my shoulders". "I feel like being raised to the highest heaven", replied 'Ali in holy pride. "Then", said the Prophet, "you have got your heart's desire"! 'Ali who had done his work, laughed and jumping down said, "coming down from such a height I do not feel injured in the least".

11. The boy born in the 30th year of the era of the Elephant, under the shadow of 360 idols, is today, after about a couple of decades, seen on a Prophet's shoulders, throwing the stone-gods out of his Ali's glory.

(d) Ch. 9, (e) Ch. 12. P P 3, 4. Ch. P.P. 1, 2.

(f) Ch. 14. P. 2. [g] Ch. 18. P.P. 8, 12, 17.

[h] Ch. 18. P.P. 7, 14. [i] Ch. 18. P.P. 19-24.

birth-place and restoring a purified Kabeh to the use for which Abraham had built it. The Prophet's reasons for raising 'Alí on his shoulders instead of raising himself on the other's shoulders have remained unexpressed or unreported in history. Whatever they be, it is clear, that iconoclast Abraham's work had been undone by the usurping idols, but inconoclast 'Alí did his work, under Mohammed, with a thoroughness that has left no chance for the idols to venture back into the Kabeh. The Kabeh, to this day, is in the world the greatest house of Monotheism, the noblest sign, the eternal symbol of the Oneness of God, and 'Alí's seal is imprinted deep and large on this house of God. Abraham and Ishmael built it. Mohammed and 'Alí are its spiritual renovators.

Noble scions of the ancient patriarchal stock, Mohammed and 'Alí were the prototypes of their great progenitors, Abraham and Ishmael; they were the Divine response to Abraham's prayer for a Muslim society, in later generations, similar to that of the Patriarch and his Apostolic son, Ishmael.

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- (j) The prayer and its occasion are given in the Quran, Part I, Ch. II, v. 125 -129 "and when we made the house a resort for men and a [place of] security, and Appoint for yourself a place of prayer on the standing-place of Abraham. And we enjoined Abraham and Ishmael, saying: Purify my house for those who visit (it) and those who abide [in it] for devotion and those who bow down [and] for those who prostrate themselves. And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the Foundations of the House. Our Lord! accept from us! surely Thou art the Hearing and Knowing. Our Lord, and make us both [Muslims] submissive to Thee, and raise from our offspring a nation [Muslim] submitting to thee.... Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them".

Having purified the Kabeh, the Prophet delivered a sermon to the assembled people and then asked the Meccans as to what treatment should be meted out to them. "Kindness and pity, gracious brother and nephew", was their reply.^k Tears came into the Prophet's eyes "I shall speak to you as Joseph spoke to his brothers. I shall not reproach you today; God will forgive, for He is most Merciful and Compassionate".^l The Prophet received, on the hill of Sefá, the Meccans' pledge, "they would worship none but God, nor commit larceny, adultery or infanticide, utter not falsehood, nor speak ill of women".^m "In the midst of his triumph, however, he rejected all homage paid exclusively to himself...and all authority...The whole conduct of Mohammed...showed that it was a religious more than a military triumph".ⁿ

12. The fall of Mecca and the purification of the Kabeh had broken the back-bone of idolatry. With instructions to preach peace and good will and vengeance in no case to use arms except in self-defence, the Prophet sent out his disciples, under armed escorts, to call to Islam the wild sons of the desert. Khálid^o bin Welíd was depued to Tihámeh. He passed through the territory of the Beni Jezimeh, a bedouin tribe that had, with a few exceptions, killed the uncle of Khalid who now took opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon them. He massacred as many of them as he could lay hands upon, and laid waste the country. When the Prophet heard of this wanton outrage he raised his hands towards heaven and cried, "O Lord, I am innocent of what Khálid has

(k) Ibn Hishám, Tabrí, (l) Tabrí.

(m) Abn Athír, (n) Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(o) Ch. 20. P. 1.

done, against my instructions".^p Khálid when upbraided tried to shift the burden of the black deed to the shoulders of Abdur Rehmán bin Auf.

13. The generous 'Alí was immediately sent forth to make every possible reparation. "It was a mission ^{Missionary of} congenial with Ali's nature and he executed ^{Peace.} it faithfully". After making careful inquiries as to the number of deaths, their status and the loss suffered by each of the aggrieved family, 'Alí paid the blood money liberally, "when every loss was made good, he distributed the remainder of the money he had brought among the kinsmen of the victims and other members of the tribe, gladdening every heart, says the chronicler, by his gentleness and benevolence. Carrying with him the blessings of the whole people, he returned to the Prophet who overwhelmed him with thanks and praises".^q He paid the blood money which satisfied the tribesmen. He further added a sum to compensate for the loss of services. The tribesmen were thankful. He added compensation for the killed or injured animals which added to the tribe's thankfulness. When 'Alí paid down for wasted crops and vexation, they blessed him. Having paid up for all the items, when he gifted the rest of his funds the tribe prayed for the Prophet and his good hearted emissary.^r

14. Apart from the moral ugliness of Khálid's unprovoked outrage, the use of the Prophet's forces for unauthorised, personal purposes was very im-
Impolitic.politic and from the military point of view,

(p) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

[q] The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali, Ibn Athir, Ibn Hishám, and Tabri, [r] Hayat ul Qulub.

highly inexpedient. Petty tribes, in equal or subordinate friendly alliance, would get suspicious of the Prophet's strength and begin seriously thinking of a coalition, parallel to the Prophet's power. The Prophet's forces and capable captains had been sent out to distant and different territories; Meccah was a new acquisition that had not yet been closely affiliated to the Faith; hostile propagandists were likely to exploit the incident for detaching Islam's new allies and frightening the older ones out of their alliance. Meccah itself might take the lead in any hostile movement. Khálid's blunder was a spark calculated to raise a conflagration from one end of the country to the other. Nay, more, other captains were likely to follow Khálid's vicious example. The Prophet, as a matter of fact, had sent out not military detachments but missionaries. All the tribes intended to be visited were likely to get frightened and hostile. Such an impression would make the missionary work impossible. Khálid had created an extremely delicate situation, he had jeopardised the prestige, good name and mission of Islam. The Prophet selected 'Alí to set the situation right, and 'Alí did it, as he had done on so many other occasions. 'Alí was the Prophet's messenger of Peace, as he was Islam's invulnerable soldier.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HOSTILITY OF THE BEDOUINS.

The battle of Hunein,—Abù Sufyàn's treason—'Ali's loyalty—the Mowellefatul-Qulûb—love of booty—'Ali is greeted and is the Prophet's confidante—the Beni 'Amir offer to barter their Faith for the Caliphate—The Beni Teiy—Hâtim's daughter befriended by 'Ali.

1. Bigoted idolaters, custodians of the bejewelled moon-goddess, el Lât, the Beni Theqîf, who had cruelly expelled the Prophet from Táyif when he
The Coalition. had sought the protection of their city^s against the Meccans' persecution, now organised a coalition of the Bení Hewázín, the Bení Sad and several other hardy tribes of the desert. Málik, the Theqîfite chief, thus, had four thousand allied forces to give a set back to the growing power of Mohammed. To guard against a capricious disruption of the forces each tribe brought its families and flocks as hostages and encamped in the valley of Autás, between Hunein and Táyif.

2. The Prophet, apprised of these preparations, marched thither to anticipate the attack. Sad bin Abú Weqqás, Umer bin Khettáb and Khálid bin
Hunein. Welid carried their tribal banners while 'Ali carried the standard of the Faith. Passing through the deep, gloomy valley of Hunein the Muslims were surprised. Darts, stones and arrows were showered upon them from everywhere and from behind every stone. Panic-stricken, the Muslims ran. "In vain did Mahomet call upon them as their general or appeal to them as the Prophet of God. Each man sought but his own safety

and an escape from this horrible valley. For a moment all seemed lost, and some recent but unwilling converts betrayed an exultation in the supposed reverse of fortune of the Prophet. 'By heavens', cried Abú Sufián, as he looked after the flying Muslims, 'nothing will stop them until they reach the sea?' 'Aye', exclaimed another, 'the magic power of Mohammed is at an end?' A third, who cherished a lurking revenge for the death of his father slain by the Moslems in the battle of Ohod, would have killed the Prophet in the confusion had he not been surrounded and protected by a few devoted followers".^t 'Alí stuck bravely to the Prophet's banner and with him were others, namely, Abú Sufián bin Háreth,^u 'Abdullah bin Masúd and 'Abbás. According to another version^v Jafer, Rebieh, Qethem and Fezel sons of Abbás, Usámeh bin Zeid, his brother and mother's brother also remained with the Prophet.

3. At the Prophet's bidding the stentorian voice of 'Abbás resounded through the valley to rally the Muslim round. The enemy descended from the hills;
 Ali Abú Jerdel, a tall sturdy Arab came on a camel to challenge the Muslims to single combat. There was hesitation among the Muslim warriors but 'Alí, as usual, accepted the challenge, advanced, fought and killed the heathen.

Then ensued a bloody conflict, the tribesmen were defeated. The Bení Theqif ran to Táýif, others retreated to the camp at Autás which surrendered after a

(t) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(u) A Hāshimite, the Prophet's uncle and not the Ummeyyâd, chief.

(v) Rauza tus Sefa.

tough battle in defence of the families and flocks gathered there in pursuance of Málík's foolish idea.^w Men, women, children, flocks and herds that had been brought into the camp by way of security against desertion, now, fell into the hands of the Muslims as war booty.

The Prophet pursued the Bení Theqíf to their fortified town Táýif. The siege was raised after about 20 days, for the Prophet thought that the town could not, in the atmosphere created all around it, long persist in its fool-hardy idolatry. The Prophet's idea proved true because, shortly after, the tribe led by their chief, Málík, voluntarily embraced Islam.

4. Raising the siege, the Prophet returned to Autás. During the afternoon prayers, a deputation from the prisoners of war waited upon the Prophet, supplicating his intercession with the Muslims and the Muslims' intercession with the Prophet for restoring to them their families and liberty. "My own share in the captives and that of the children of 'Abdul Muttalib I give you back at once," replied the Prophet. The Muslims followed the Prophet's example and six thousand people were, in a moment, set free.^x Their effects and belongings were, of course, distributed among the captors.

5. Some of the Ansárs did not like the newly converted Abú Sufiyán and his Meccans getting the larger share that the Prophet assigned them in the booty. The discontent reaching his ear, the Prophet addressed them in words which show the

(w) P. 1. Supra.

[x] Ibn Hisham, Ibn Athir, and Tabri.

hold he had over the hearts of the Medinites, the devotion he inspired them with and also that he had no material rewards to offer them. "Ye Ansárs, I have learnt the discourse you hold amongst yourselves. When I came amongst you, you were wandering in darkness, and the Lord gave you the right direction; you were suffering, He made you happy; at enmity amongst yourselves and He has filled your hearts with brotherly love and concord. Was it not so, tell me?" 'Indeed it is even as thou sayest', was the reply, 'to the Lord and His Prophet belong benovolence and grace'. 'Nay, by the Lord', continued the Prophet, 'but you might have answered and answered truly, for I would have testified to its truth myself. Thou camest to us rejected as an imposter and we believed in thee; thou camest as a helpless fugitive and we assisted thee; poor and an outcast, and we gave thee an asylum; comfortless and we solaced thee. Ye Ansárs, why disturb your hearts because of the things of this life? Are you not satisfied that others should obtain the flocks and the camels while you go back unto your homes with me in your midst? By Him who holds my life in His hands, I shall never abandon you. If all mankind went one way and the Ansárs another, verily, I would join the Ansárs. The Lord be favourable unto them and bless them and their children, and their children's children'. At these words, says the chronicler, they all wept until the tears ran down upon their beards. And they all cried with one voice, 'Yea, Prophet of God, we are well satisfied with our share'. 'Thereupon they retired happy and contended'.^v

6. After the siege of Táýif the Prophet sent 'Alí to

invite the neighbouring tribes to Islam. But for a few Mohammed skirmishes 'Alí succeeded so well in carrying and 'Alí. the message of the Religion of Peace and weaning the tribes from idolatry that the Prophet shouted "Allah-o-Akbar", by way of grateful greetings, to welcome home the Missionary of Islam.

7. The Prophet is reported to have taken 'Alí aside for a confidential talk. The nature or details of the talk Exchange of are not given in history evidently because it Confidence. was confidential. 'Alí's great prowess on the field of war and aptitude in matters spiritual must have led to a discussion of the future of Islam between the Teacher and the Disciple. The Prophet's reply to Umer supports the conjecture. 'Umer bin Khattáb noticed the length of the talk and could not repress the remark, "Prophet of God! it is rather a longish exchange of confidence". "Yes", replied the Prophet, "It is the command of Allah. But I am afraid your words have the savour of those you used at Hudeibieh".^z

8. The Bení 'Ámir, a powerful bedouin tribe that still defied Islam, had for their chief 'Ámir bin Tufail, renowned for personal beauty and magnificence. At the great fair of 'Ukáz (near Mecca) where merchants, pilgrims, poets and the people from all corners of the land gathered annually, his herald proclaimed to the hungry, the wayfarer and the persecuted to come to 'Ámir for food, beast of burden or protection. His generosity was as dazzling as his ambi-

(z) Seb'ih Tirmazi, Rauza-tu-Shohedá, Qura'-tul 'Ayùn, a commentary on Ser'ur ul Mehzûn. For the remarks at Hudeibieh, vide Ch. 19. P.17.

tion was great. When advised to come to terms with the Prophet's daily-growing power he is said to have contemptuously remarked, "I have sworn never to rest until I have won all Arabia, and shall I do homage to this Qureishite?" But the Prophet's recent victories made him revise his opinion. Coming to Medineh he sought to bargain with the Prophet. "Wilt thou content thyself over the sway of the Arabs of the cities and leave to me the bedouins of the desert?" Replied to in the negative he asked, 'what then will I *gain* by embracing the faith?' 'The fellowship of all true believers', being the reply, he said, 'I covet no such fellowship', and returned to his tribe".^a Quoting Ibn Athir, Ibn Khuldún makes him say also, "if we accept your faith and your God gives you supremacy over your enemies, will you make us your Caliph?". "That rests in the hand of Allah", was the Prophet's reply. "That is good", rejoined the chief, "We should now place our necks under the swords of your enemies, but gaining you success against them we should let the Caliphate pass on to other hands".

9. The Bení Teiy, better known for their valorous chief, Hátim, whose generosity has become proverbial throughout the East, though Christians, were idolatrous. Their temple was a famous resort of idolatry. The tribe showed signs of hostility and the Prophet, in 9 H (=630—631. A. D.) sent a punitive party of 150 horsemen, under 'Alí. Hátim's son, Adí, who now held sway in place of his deceased father, fled with his wife, leaving behind his youthful sister. The tribesmen gave battle but were worsted. 'Alí returned with prisoners among whom was 'Adí's sister. She unsuc-

(a) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

cessfully implored the Prophet for release. "On the following day, as Mahomet was passing by, Ali, who had been touched by the woman's beauty and her grief, whispered to her to arise and entreat the Prophet once more. She accordingly repeated her prayer. 'Oh Prophet of God, my father is dead; my brother, who should have been my protector, has abandoned me. Have mercy upon me, as God will have mercy upon thee?' Mahomet turned upon her benignantlly. 'Be it so', said he, and he not only set her free, but gave her raiment and a camel, and sent her by the first caravan bound to syria".^b She upbraided her brother for desertion, praised the Prophet's leniency and advised him to see the Prophet and adopt his faith. 'Adi admitted his fault, accepted her advice, adopted Islam and became one of 'Ali's staunchest friends.'^c

(b) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(c) Ch. 88. P.P, 5,9, 12.

CHAPTER XXII. THE EXPEDITION AGAINST TEBUK.

Tebuk—'Alī officiates for the Prophet—the Hypocrites' desertion and sedition—'Alī, The Prophet's Caliph—'Alī, the new Aaron to the new Moses.

1. Elated by his victories over the Persians, Heraclius returned to his dominions to fulfil his ancient predecessor, Emperor Augustine's dream of the conquest of Arabia. ^{A false alarm,} The strange reorganisation of the scattered Arabian tribes under a new visionary, the recent repulse suffered by the Imperial forces at the hand of a handful of Arabs^d could not have escaped the eye of the Byzantine politicians. News arrived that the Emperor had directed his Syrain feudatories to collect an overwhelming force against Arabia. If true, it was a serious danger to the Islamic Commonwealth. With a view to forestall the trouble, the Prophet decided to meet the enemy at the frontier. Volunteers were summoned. The severe drought that had afflicted Hijáz and Nejd, the consequent ruin of the date-crop that formed the staple food of the people, the starvation and wide-spread death among the beasts of burden, heat of the season and the length of the journey coupled with the great prestige and marvellous stories regarding the power of the Byzantine Empire made the people unwilling to join the expedition. The Hypocrites left no stone unturned in adding to the timidity of the timorous. A sufficient force was, nevertheless, collected and the Prophet marched at the head of the Jeish ul 'Usr (the army of distress, so called on account of the difficulty with which it was collected) to the Imperial frontier. At the very

first stage from the City, the Hypocrites bivouaced separately and when the army marched forth in the morning they, under the arch-Hypocrite 'Abdullah^e bin Ubeiyi returned to Medineh. After a long and painful journey through heat and thirst, the army reached Tebúk to learn that the reported attack was mere moonshine and that the Emperor was too busy in internal affairs to think of a transborder expedition. The Muslims, therefore, retraced their steps after a sojourn of about 20 days at Tebúk.

2. The Prophet used to keep his objective undisclosed but this time, because of the distance trouble and risks, he had departed from the rule. The Caliph, length of the Prophet's absence from home, the presence at home of a large number of the newly affiliated tribes, the unusually large number of backsliders who, probably, listening to the Hypocrites, had, instead of joining the army, preferred to stay at home, were matters demanding serious consideration of the head of the State on the eve of his long absence from the head-quarter. The Prophet had read aright the situation. Some one had sounded a false alarm to make the Prophet run to a distant, dangerous frontier and run with a very small force. The Hypocrites first marched with the army but kept in a separate block and then stole back into the City. During the Prophet's absence the Hypocrites' attempts to win 'Ali's loyalty or disaffect him towards the Prophet, as would be shown presently, prognosticated the black designs and intentions of a group in the City. Under the circumstances it was absolutely necessary to leave behind, in charge of the City, a

strong man with great prestige, whose integrity should be thoroughly reliable and loyalty above the least shadow of doubt. 'Ali was such a man and the Prophet left him in charge of the city.

'Abdulleh and his party, finding 'Ali's able administration and vigilance a hinderance, tried to sow seeds of disaffraction by magnifying the dangers of the expedition, minimising the quill-driver's work of civil administration and saying that the Prophet had taken enough work out of 'Ali and had now no need of him; "They spread the report that the Prophet had not taken his cousin with him as he was apprehensive of the dangers of the expedition".^f "Repairing to Ali, Abdullah endeavoured to make him discontented with his position alleging that Mahomet had left him in charge of Medina solely to rid himself of an encumbrance".^g

Given the presence of the Prophet in a battle it can always be presumed that 'Ali is there to fight for the Prophet. This was the first occasion that 'Ali was not in the Prophet's army, and there was the ugly talk. It cut him to the quick but he was made of a stuff far purer than of those who harbour a grievance and sit on it to hatch it into discontent.

Nominating a governor to officiate after him, 'Ali takes his field-accoutrement and hastens after the army. The indispensable Companion, the invaluable friend in need, the invulnerable warrior, the indefatigable soldier whipped and lashed from behind by the malicious talk, wends his way to the Prophet. The firm unswerving

(f) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

(g) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

feet of the soldier of Islam and the standard-bearer of the Faith, now, go heavy and staggering but he goes, to clear all doubts, to justify his position and to assure the Master of his unalloyed loyalty, his unfaltering fealty, and to satisfy him and to demonstrate to him, if any demonstration was at all necessary, that, now, as ever, he is ready to sacrifice his life and his all at the feet of his cousin, Teacher and Prophet.

Face to face with the Prophet stands 'Alī. He has renounced the comfortable job of a governor; he has run away from personal safety and adopted the road to the perils of the battlefield. His godly face pale with anxiety and mental agitation, his heart of gold palpitating, his sweet eloquent tongue tied, in trembling, tremulous small voice he humbly submits what he has heard at Medineh and waits for the Prophet's verdict.

3. Love, affection, service; inconveniences undergone, troubles borne, risks gone through, perils braved, sacrifices made by the noble youth rise personified before the eyes of the Prophet; efforts made, battles fought, work done and results achieved by and with the help of the dear youth portray the past; the scar hewed on the high forehead by 'Amr's sword, in the battle of the Moat,^h lead the Prophet right into the agonised heart of his interviewer. The Prophet, the master-reader of human nature, in a moment reads the pangs of 'Alī's childlike heart and hastens to explain to him the position. Pronouncing the reported talk to be a base calumny, he says, "These men are liars. They are the party of Hypocrites and Doubters who would

(h) Ch. 18. P. 9.

breed sedition in Medina. I left thee behind to keep watch over them and to be a guardian to both our families. I would have thee to me what Aaron was to Moses, excepting that thou canst not be like him a Prophet, I being the last of the Prophets".ⁱ "I have appointed thee my Vicegerent (Khalifā) and left thee in my stead. Return then to thy post and be my Deputy over my people and thine. O Ali, art thou not content that thou art to me what Aaron was to Moses".^j 'Alī returned contented to Medineh.

(i) The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(j) The Sprit of Islam by Amir Ali,

See Also Tabri and Abdul Fidā. Ibn Hishām's words in Arabic are
 فقال كذبوا ولنفي خلافتك كما تركت وراي فارجع فا خلقني في اهل بيته واهلك
 ا فلا ترضى يا على ان تكون مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى

The Shi'ehs says that the Prophet distinctly indicated by the words that 'Alī should be his successor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RIDE MY BROTHER. GOD AND HIS APOSTLE ARE PLEASED WITH THEE.

'Ali's strategy—'Ali rides, the Prophet walks along with him—The Prophet's *brother* with whom Allah is pleased—The Prophet does not speak his mind lest 'Ali be deified as the Christians had done regarding Jesus.

1. Learning that a body of Arabs were preparing a night attack on Medineh, the Prophet sent, in the 9th year of the Hijreh, a punitive expedition under The Victor AbúBiker; the enemy concentrated in a thicket, surprised and routed the approaching Muslims. Another force under 'Umer bin Khattáb met the same fate. 'Amr bin 'Aas captained the third batch which also fell victim to the same strategy. 'Ali, at last was deputed to the task, with him went the three former Captains. 'Ali gave up the road, marched at night and by the bye-paths. 'Amr bin 'Aas, with Abú Biker and 'Umer bin Khattáb advised a night attack but 'Ali disagreed. 'Amr, getting offended, tried to stir up disaffection among the soldiery,^k sometimes by dilating upon the difficulties of the road, the timings of the march and the dangers of night marches through a wild country full of ferocious animals. But 'Ali's name, his solicitude for the comfort and safety of the troops held the soldiery in thorough loyalty. Reaching the enemy-stronghold, 'Ali ordained absolute silence and ordered the muzzling of the beasts of burden. Resting his troops during the night 'Ali delivered the attack early in the morning. Thrice had the enemy defeated the Muslims; this time they had to contend against a different Captain. There

(k) See for his treachery Ch. 11. PP. 4, 6.

was a battle and a defeat for the enemy.

2. The Prophet had come up to the mosque at Ahzáb to see off 'Alí; at the head of his Companions the Civic Prophet came out of the City to receive the reception. victorious Captain, Alí.

'Alí's military duty was over, he was now being accorded a civic reception. Seeing the Prophet arrive on foot, 'Alí tried to alight but the Teacher divining the intention of his heroic Disciple—ever a fighter and ever a victor, the soldier of Islam and its protector, the saviour of the Faith and its good name, who had extricated Islam out of so many predicaments—intervened between 'Alí's intention and action, to affectionately command, "*Ride, brother; God and His Apostle are pleased with thee*".

3. And Mohammed, the founder of Islam, one of the greatest lawgivers of the world, the greatest pro-
Jesus and 'Alí pounder of the Unity of God said to 'Alí—said the master-reader of human nature— "I would say concerning thee (but I am afraid of my people saying of thee what the Christians say of Jesus, son of Mary) things that would make people kiss the very ground under thy feet".¹

But what did the Prophet want to say? 'Alí was returning from a military expedition and Jesus was not a soldier. The personality of Jesus is known for his all-embracing love, love for humanity and high spirituality. The Prophet's keen eye had read 'Alí's mind and likened him to the great Seer of Nazareth. The Prophet was

(1) Rauzâ tus Sefâ; Seyúdí, in the Târikh ul Khulefâ and Iksir ut Twârikh, quoting Imâm Ahmad bin Henbel.

continually and continuously watching 'Ali's mental and moral development. Once before, he had likened him to the Apostolic lieutenant of Moses.^m Now, likening him to the Teacher of Galilee, he wanted to say things but did not, lest people, like unto the people of Jesus, should deify him. The Prophet had left it unsaid, for fear of inferior intellects;ⁿ 'Ali was not God but godlike, divine: was it what the Prophet wanted to say?

(m) Ch. 22. P. 3.

(n) Carlyle sketching 'Ali, in his Heroes and Hero-worship, goes into raptures and longs to take him up as a model of Christian Knight-hood (Ch. 9. p. 5) The Nusseries and Druses have actually deified him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE YEAR OF DEPUTATIONS.

Tribal deputations arrive and receive charters of liberty—banishing idolatry—‘Ali supercedes Abū Biker—‘Ali alone could do what the Apostle ought to do—the Declaration of Discharge—‘Ali, the Son of law-giving progenitors.

The fall of Mecceh sealed the fate of Arab idolatry. The purification of the Kabeh awakened Arabs to the futility of idol-worship. Deputations began to arrive from all tribes of the Peninsula. A charter was granted to each tribe, guaranteeing the tribal rights and privileges; a teacher was sent with the deputationists to instruct the tribe in the principles of Islam. The 9th year of the Hijreh is known as “the Year of Deputations”.

1. In spite of the fall of Mecca, heathen rites of the Pilgrimage had not been banned. Now that idolatry was practically extinct, it was necessary to “remove once for all any possibility of a relapse into idolatry on the part of those upon whom the new creed hung somewhat lightly. Some of the tribes had time and again proved false to their alliance with the Muslims and taken unfair advantage of their treaty rights”. Towards the end of the year and during the month of the Pilgrimage, the Prophet, being himself busy at home, sent Abū Biker to lead 300 Medinites in the rites of the Muslim Pilgrimage and entrusted to him his camels, to sacrifice on the day of the ‘annual sacrifices’ and also to proclaim to the Pilgrims the “Declaration of Discharge”.

2. Abū Biker had gone some distance when the

Prophet despatched 'Alí in supercession^o of Abú Biker.

Ordained. 'Alí, whom the Prophet had lent for the purpose, his swiftest camel, soon overtook Abú Biker who, coming back to Medineh,^p submitted the supercession as a grievance to the Prophet, but being pacified by the assurance that the promulgation of new revelations was Ordained to be done either by the Prophet himself or by some one from his immediate family, he went back^q to Meccah.

3. After the ceremonies of the Pilgrimage were performed and the sacrifices made, 'Alí stood high on the hill, and to the immense multitude from far and near and from all corners of the land Promulgated announcing himself as the Prophet's messenger, proclaimed,

"No idolater shall, after this year, perform the Pilgrimage; no one shall make the circuit (of the Temple) naked;^r whoever hath a treaty with the Prophet, it shall continue binding till its termination; for the rest, four months are allowed to every man to return to his territories; after that there will exist no obligation on the Prophet, except towards those with whom treaties have been concluded".^s

It was a momentous announcement. Unbacked by any military force for immediate use, its proclamation to the immense multitude, of which the heathens or the heathen-minded formed a by no means small part, was a task fraught with great dangers. It required 'Alí's

(o) Ibn Kheldun and Ibn Athir. (p) Abul Fida and Rauza tus-Sefa (q) Abul Fida. (r) Ch. 5. P. 7.

(s) The Spirit of Islm by Amir Ali.

great and youthful courage to proclaim it. Verily, the Prophet had not erred in selecting the most suitable man for the task.

4. Quseiy had protected the Kabeh against invasion^t, his great-grandson, 'Abdul Muttelib stood by it against the destructive Abysinnian,^u Abdul Law-giver Muttalib's two grandsons, having purified it and restored it to the use for which Abraham and Ishamael^v had built it were now perpetuating it as the centre of Monotheism. Mohammed willed and commanded it, 'Alí proclaimed the will and promulgated the command.

In 'Alí's voice the Arabs heard the voice of their ancient lawgivers, Quseiy^w and 'Abdul Muttelib,^x and obeyed. The heathens heard the voice of "right guidance" they had scoffed^y at, dictating its command, and they bowed to the inevitable.

The Aaron^z to Moses, the prototype of Jesus^a of Nazareth had progressed beyond similes and metaphors and by the will^b of God and His Prophet was actually performing a task Apostolic.

(t) Ch, 3, P, 4. (u) Ch, 3, P, 8. (v) Ch, 1, P, 2.

(w) Ch, 3, P, 4. (x) Ch, 3, P.P. 9,11. (y) Ch, 9, P.P 4,5

(z) Ch. 22, S, 3. (a) Ch, 23, S, 3. (b) P, 2. Supra.

CHAPTER XXV. THE PROPHET'S DUPLICATE.

Ali's spiritual progress—Ali, the Prophet's *self*— Ali collaborates with the Prophet for vindicating the truth of Islam.

The Prophet had wanted to say concerning Ali what would make people kiss the very ground under his feet but did not say it lest his people should begin saying of him what the Christians had begun saying about Jesus.^c The Prophet in not saying it had said a lot but he soon was afforded an opportunity of indicating what he meant to say. On the occasion of the Call to the kinsmen^d the Prophet had pointed out 'Ali as his Caliph, representative, vizier and vicegerent;^e later he had called him his "brother in this world and the hereafter",^f rising high above the plane of personal connections, 'Ali's work in the battle of the Moat was pronounced to be "weightier than the best deeds of all Muslims of all times"^g at Kheiber he was recognised as the one "who loves God and His Prophet and whom God and His Prophet love",^h and authoritatively announced by the Prophet to be one who, by his deeds, had "pleased God and His Apostle";ⁱ 'Ali had morally risen above the commonalty and was likened first to Moses' lieutenant Aaron^j and then to one of the greatest of the Prophets, Jesus;^k rising above similitudes he was called upon to actually officiate for the Prophet;^l it was time now to declare 'Ali's status. The Prophet showed to the world that 'Ali was his spiritual duplicate.

1. Among the Deputations^m that visited the Pro-

(c) Ch, 23, P. 3. (d) Ch, 4, P. 2 (e) Ch. 9, P.P. 3,5.

(f) Ch, 15, P. 3. [g] Ch, 19, P, 12. [h] Ch, 19, P.P. 20,23.

[i] Ch, 19, P, 25. [j] Ch, 22, P, 3. [k] Ch, 23, P, 3,

[l] Ch 24. P. 1. [m] Ch. 24.

phet at Medíneh was one from the Nejrán Christians. They were suprised to find the Prophet in-
 Nejrán attentive. They approached 'Uthmán bin
 Christians. 'Effán and 'Abdur Rehmán bin 'Auf who happened to be
 known to them and complained of the Prophet's inatten-
 tion. They too failed to understand the unusual attitude
 of the ever-courteous Prophet and took the deputation-
 ists to 'Alí who advised them to lay aside their rich silks
 and jewellery and go in simpler apparel. Complying
 with 'Alí's advice, they found the Prophet all attention
 and courtesy. The Prophet invited them to Islam but
 they offered to accept it on the basis of Mubáhileh.ⁿ The
 Prophet accepted the challenge and said, in the words
 of the Quran, ".....come! let us call our sons and your
 sons and our women and your women and our selves and
 your selves, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray
 for the curse of Allah on the liars".^o

2. Marched forth the little procession of the cham-
 pions of the truth of Islam, the Prophet at the head with
 his little grandsons—'Alí's sons—on either
 side, his daughter, Fátiméh—'Alí's wife—
 following, 'Alí^p covered the rear. The Doctors
 of Nejrán saw the procession and withdrew
 the challenge, for they felt the Prophet's earnestness.
 Mohammed, who was exposing his all to the ordeal,
 could not be an imposter.

Exposing his whole family to the curse of God,

[n] An Arab custom, according to which contestants come
 together and pray for God's curse to descend in some
 tangible form on whomsoever is in the wrong.

[o] The Quran. Part III. Ch. 3. v. 60.

[p] Siyùti, Sehih Muslim, and Ràzi.

shows the sincerity of 'Ali's faith in the truth of Islam. Having officiated for the Prophet in proclaiming the "Declaration of Discharge",^a 'Ali is now called upon by the Prophet to be a colleague and collaborator in the discharge of his Apostolic work of vindicating the truth of the Faith.

[a] Ch. 24.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE VALEDICTORY PILGRIMAGE.

'Alí commissioned to preach Islam to Yemen—and Nejrán—the Prophet's Pilgrimage—his last sermon—an urgent Revelation—the concourse at Khumm—Ceremoniously the Prophet declared 'Alí to be his peoples' Master—The people tender their greetings to 'Alí—With the ceremony the Faith is Divinely declared to be perfected—a poet's verses.

1. The Prophet was now practically the Master of all Arabia. He sent representatives to various provinces. Khálid bin Welid was sent out to Arabia Felix (Yemen.)

Alí converts Yemen. A portion of it proving refractory, the Prophet sent 'Alí to call them to the Faith. At

the head of 300 cavalry 'Alí went there and after a slight skirmish reduced the recalcitrants to submission. Then he preached Islam to them, read out to them the Prophet's instructions, warned them against the wrath of the Lord, the evils of heathenism and the good of Mohammed's gospel. It is unfortunate that history has not preserved the address which was so effective as to convert on the spot the powerful tribe of Hemdán. 'Alí sent the news to the Prophet who prostrated himself before the good Lord, in humble thanksgiving. After the tribe of Hamdán, hosts upon hosts of the Yemenites embraced Islam.

'Alí was then deputed to administer Nejrán.

The Prophet was getting old, extraordinary physical and mental strain was telling on his health; the poison administered to him by the treacherous Jews of Kheiber, after they had been granted general amnesty, was troubling him more and more in his infirmity. He, therefore, announced his intention of performing the Pilgrimage.

"It brought devotees from all parts of Arabia to follow the pilgrim-Prophet. The streets of Medina were crowded with the various tribes from the towns and the cities, from the fastnesses of the mountains and the remote parts of the desert and the surrounding valleys were studded with their tents. It was a striking picture of the triumph of a faith, these recently disunited, barbarous tribes brought together as brotheren, and inspired by one sentiment of religious zeal".^r The Prophet marched at the head of a hundred and 24 thousand pilgrims and reached Meccah where 'Alí also joined the immense concourse. Conscious that life was waning away within him he preached frequently in the Kabeh from the pulpit or in the open, from the back of his camel.

2. 'Ye people! listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you at this place.

'Your lives and properties are sacred amongst one another until you appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all; and (remember) you shall have to appear before your Lord who shall demand from you an account of all your actions... Ye people, ye have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you... Treat your wives with kindness and love. Verily, ye have taken them on the security of God and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.

'Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you and avoid sin. Usury is forbidden. The debtor shall return only the principal; and the beginning will be made with

[r] The Life of Mahomet by W. Irving.

(the loans) of my uncle 'Abbás son of 'Abdul Muttalib... Henceforth the vengeance of blood, practised in the days of paganisn, is prohibited and all blood-feud abolished, commencing with the murder of Ibn Rabia son of Hārith son of 'Abd-ul-Muttalib.

'And your slaves! see that you feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves and clothe them with the stuff ye wear, and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then, part from them, for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be harshly treated.

'Ye people! listen to my words and understand the same. Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother unless freely given out of good will. Guard yourself from committing injustice.

'Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Hoply he that shall be told may remember better than he that hath heard it....'

Towards the conclusion of the sermon, the Prophet, overcome by the sight of the immense enthusiasm of the people as they drank in his words, exclaimed, 'O Lord, I have delivered my message and accomplished my work!' The assembled crowd below, with one voice cried, 'Yea, verily thou hast'. 'O Lord, I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness unto it,'^s

3. The Prophet marched back to Medineh. As the Prophet reached Khumm^t he received, on the 18th of the

(s) The Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali.

[t] Between Meccah and Medineh, a place with a tank.—Ibn Kholdun.

At Khumm month of Zul Hijjah, in the 10th year of the Hijreh, a Revelation, "O Apostle! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord. and if you do it not then you have not delivered His Message, and Allah will protect you from the people, surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people".^u

The Prophet halted. Those who had gone ahead were called back to Khumm. It being a junction of roads, men were stationed to stop people from going their different ways before listening to the new Revelation.

The immense concourse of Arab pilgrims was concentrated on the wide desert expanse of Khumm. Beasts of burden were unladen and the vast multitude encamped on the burning sands under the scorching sun of Arabia. An assembling-ground was prepared. The camels' saddles were heaped together to form a high pulpit. Up the high improvised pulpit the Prophet ascended. With reference to the words of the Quránic verse, "with the believers, the Prophet is their master more than they are masters of their selves", he asked them, 'Am I not your Master more than you are masters of your selves'.

'Yea, it is so', cried the surging mass of humanity below and around him.^v

'My people! I shall be questioned by the Lord about the faithful delivery of the Message, and you shall likewise be questioned'. 'Yes, we are witnesses to the fact that you have delivered the Message and shown us the right path of guidance' with one voice replied the

(u) The Qurán Part. VI, Ch. V, v. 667. (v) Tafsír Sha libì.

assemblage.

'Yea, I, too, attest that I have delivered the Message and given you the right guidance', said the Prophet; 'And, my people! do you not attest that there is no God but Allah, Who alone is to be adored; and that I am His Apostle?' 'Yes we do,' said the gathering.

'I attest to your having so attested', said the Prophet. 'My people! I am *bequeathing* to you two things, if you hold fast to them after me, you shall not go *astray*, the one is the Book and the other my Ahl-Beit.^w The Lord has told me that these two shall not part company till they join me in Heaven. My people! am I not your Master more than you are masters of your own selves'. "You are, you are", assented the audience. Thrice did the Prophet repeat the question and thrice did the people reiterate their affirmation".^x

4. Then did the Prophet call 'Alí to him on the pulpit, take him by the hand and raise it high till the cloth under his armpit became visible. Thus pointing out 'Alí to the populace, the Prophet proclaimed, "Be my witness, O Lord, of whomsoever I am the Master, 'Alí likewise is his Master. My Lord! befriend his friends and be Thou the enemy of his enemies; help his helpers and shun those who shun him, and let Truth be with 'Alí.^y

(w) Ahl Beit (literally, the people of the house) a term applied to Alí, his wife Fátiméh, and their children, Hasan and Husain. Seyûti and the Spirit of Islam by Amir Ali,

(x) Tafsir Tha'lebi.

(y) Menáhij-un-Nebuwat, Tirmezi, Nisàyi and Musned Imám Ahmed bin Henbel.

5. The Prophet descended down the pulpit, went into his tent, desired 'Alī to go into his own, and asked people to see and congratulate 'Alī. Umer bin Khettāb was one of those who went to 'Alī's tent and congratulated him on the ceremony and for being the *Maula* of all Muslims, both males and female.^z

Alī greeted.

The Prophet had fulfilled his Mission, had shown the people the 'path of true guidance', had united them in a religious brotherhood and given them the Book of "Wisdom and Purification". But the work was new, its principles were new. It required further solidification; someone who would lead the commonwealth on the Prophet's principles, or else the whole work was likely to go to pieces. Some one must be indicated to be at the helm of affairs if the infant State was to be saved a shipwreck. The work of the Apostolate was well nigh complete but would go wrong if its preservation was not provided for and the agony of a reaction not provided against. Significantly did the Revelation say, "if you do it not, then you have not delivered His Message at all". The faithful Messenger dutifully delivered the Message and indicated 'Alī to be his valuable *bequest* to his people if they cared to be kept from "*going astray*"^a This completed the Prophet's Mission, and the last verse^b of the Qurān was revealed to the Apostle and given to the Muslims,

"This day have I perfected for you your religion, and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as the religion..."^c

Hussān bin Thābit, the famous Arab poet, recited

(z) Rauzā-tus-sefā. (a) P. 3. Supra.

(b) Rāzi, Tafsir-i-Kabir. (c) The Qurān Part VI, Ch. v. 3.

extempore, the eulogium:-

1. "On the day of Khumm, he (the Prophet) called together the people and proclaimed, and what good did he proclaim!
2. And he said, 'who is your Maula and Guardian?' they said in all obedience,
3. 'Your Lord is our Maula and you are our Guardian, and you shall never find us disobedient.'
4. Then said he, 'arise, O 'Alí. (and he did) I select you to be the Leader (Imám) and the Guide after me.
5. Henceforward, of whomsoever I am the Master this ('Alí) is his guardian; sincerely be his helpers'.
6. Then he prayed, 'my Lord befriend his friends and be Thou the enemy of his enemies.'
7. Verily, of all persons he (the Prophet) particularised 'Alí with the attribute and named him vizier and brother."

CHAPTER XXVII

EXPLANATORY OF THE PREVIOUS ONE.

Authenticity of the incident—the significance of the Khumm declaration and the meaning of the Prophet's words.

1. The Khumm incident is an admitted fact among all schools of Islam, its significance, however, is sometime controverted on more or less flimsy grounds.

Manlá.

These controversialists try to soften the signification of the word *Maula* in the Prophet's address. The word carries several significations in Arabic, master, friend, client and slave. Eliminating the last two significations, the controversialists contend that the Prophet meant not 'master' but "friend". In support of their contention they allege the existence of a breach between 'Alí and 'Umer bin Khettáb which was intended to be removed at Khumm.

History does not mention any serious dispute between the two personages. Private breaches are best mended by a heart to heart talk between parted friends, through the mediation or in the presence of a common well-wisher, when they disclose their grievances, allocate blame; the party in fault admits the blame or removes it. History does not mention any such talk. Of course, one party has to be the first to make a call as 'Umer is mentioned to have done,^c but friendly delicacy demands a returning of the visit which is not mentioned in history. 'Umer's talk^d with 'Alí negatives the idea of a reconciliation after a breach. No one but a fool would congratulate another for being his (the speaker's) friend, and 'Umer congratulated 'Alí, not for being his *maula*(friend)

(c) Ch. 26. P. 5.

(d) Ch. 26. P. 5

alone but the *maula* of all the Muslims, both male and female. The controversialists' theory of reconciliation, therefore, falls to the ground.

There are others who say that *maula*, in the meaning of "friendship", if not referring to a reconciliation between any particular individuals, means "friendship", broadly between 'Alí on the one side and the general public on the other. The argument is stripped of its ingenuity by the Prophet's use of the word '*maula*' in common between himself and 'Alí.^e The Prophet, no doubt, was a friend but a superior also. He had used the word and prefaced and qualified it by referring to the Quránic verse which declared him a superior. The Prophet was not merely a friend but a leader as well. A Persian poet has clinched the argument by saying^f that 'Alí is *maula* in the sense in which the Apostle was the Muslims *maula*.

The time, place, occasion and the tone of the declaration, the arrangements and ceremoniousness accompanying it are all too significant to escape attention.

The Prophet had been speaking,^h at Meccah of his approaching end, his Mission was well nigh fulfilled; the Book was complete but for two verses (one of which was

(e) Ch. 26. P. P. 3-4.

(f) عبث در معنی من گشت مولا پیروی هر سو
علی مولا بان معنی که پیغمبر بود مولا

^fUselessly you wander about in search of the meaning of the word *maula*. Ali is *maula*, as was the Prophet your *maula*.

(g) Ch. 26. P. 3 (h) Ch. 26. P. 2

revealed before and the other immediately after^j the declaration at Khumm. The Apostle was accompanied by an immense multitude of pilgrims whose various ways parted at Khumm. Before they dispersed to different directions the Revelation was given to the Prophet desiring him to "*declare*" what had been "*revealed*" to him.

The importance of the declaration is contained in the verse itself. It speaks of the declaration being as important as the whole of the Mission put together—"if you do it not", says the verse, "then you have not delivered His Message^k". The message was worth, according to the verse the Apostle's 23 years' hard work. Did the Prophet act in pursuance of the command as contained in the verse or go to his Lord guilty of remissness? If he did obey the Command, it was in the shape of the declaration constituting *Álī* (*maulā*) Master of the people. The travellers gone ahead were summoned back, those coming along were ordered to hurry up, roads were picketed at the crossings, caravans were made to halt, their beasts of burden were unladen, tents were pitched up, a pulpit was improvised, a hundred thousand men were made to gather round the pulpit and stand on the burning sands and under Arabia's scorching sun! Why? Was it for reconciling two individuals with whose private feelings the country at large had no concern whatsoever? If so, was the Prophet cutting a practical joke at the immense gathering, or was he satisfying some craze when he intercepted men's journeys merely to disinfect them by giving them a sun-bath between the scorching Sun and the parching sand? No, it was nothing of the

(i) Ch. 26. P. 3

(j) Ch. 26. P. 5

(k) Ch. 26. P. 3.

sort. His tone showed that he was making a will in the presence of his people. He asked them if he had shown them the "path of true guidance", receiving their reply in the affirmative, he told them how to keep themselves from "going astray". The Apostle was making a will for he talked of "bequests";¹ he told them that the Book and his family were complementary and indispensable to each other and they, that is, the two together could keep the people from "going astray" from the path of "true guidance".

Mohammed spoke in the capacity of the Lord's Apostle to deliver the Lord's Message under the Lord's commands and to indicate 'Ali as "Master" to all those who took him (Mohammed) as their *maula*; the vehemence of Mohammed's address was the vehemence of one who having worked and struggled to *show* to his people the "path of true guidance" was yearning at the end of his life to *keep* them on that path and to keep them from "going astray". It was as an Apostle that he indicated 'Ali to be the *maula* of all those whose *maula* he himself was.

Taking his lesson from the history of another gifted nation in antiquity, was the Prophet trying to make the Muslims avoid the Israelites' mistake of, in Moses' absence, forsaking Aaron for the magic calf of gold?

¹ Ch. 26. S 3

CHAPTER XXVIII. THE DARK SHADOWS.

The meaning of Khumm—the attempt at the Apostle's life—Huzeifeh sees the culprits—~~pact~~—the reasons for providing for succession—the people's groupings—worldly temptations to counteract the Prophet's idea of Apostolic succession.

1. The Quránic verse, "O Apostle! deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do it not, then, you have not delivered His Message ahead. *and Allah will Protect you from the people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people*",^m in pursuance of which the declaration at Khumm was made implied that there were men who would not relish the declaration and would take measures to counteract it and its fruition.

2. Journeying back to Medíneh, climbing up the hill of 'Aqbeh, 'Ammár bin Yásir was following the Prophet's camel which was led by Huzeifeh bin Elimán when in the dark of the night was heard clatter of arms and seen a big ball of raw leather, containing pebbles, roll down, rattling, to the Prophet's camel, evidently to frighten it off the narrow path and down into the precipitous ravine. Suddenly there was a lightning-flash showing 14 armed men intent upon the Prophet's life. The leather-ball missed its purpose, the lightning-flash disclosed the conspirators' identity. Shouted at, they took to their heels. The Prophet was

saved and the codspirators' identity known.ⁿ

The Shiah author of *Hayát-ul-Qulúb* mentions from the mouth of Huzeifeh stating on the authority of Asmá, (daughter of 'Amis) wife of Abú Biker, that the 'Aqbeh conspirators, on reaching Medineh, enlarged their circle and reduced into writing² a pact determining the Caliphate.

3. It would not be out of place here to cast a glance at the past in order to correctly estimate the present. It is clear that the Prophet was not liked at Meccah whence he had to fly for his life. All Arabia fought tooth and nail against his friends at Medineh but the arms of Islam always had the better of the heathen. History exults in narrating the glories of victory but seldom depicts the other side of it. Triumph on the one side invariably generates a sense of vindictive chagrin on the other. Worst of all, the tribes came on again and again, sometimes single, sometimes in formidable coalitions but always to suffer defeat at the hand of Islam. Gradually and steadily the circle of Islam expanded to take the tribes, one by one, within its fold.

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- (n) *Ma' ārej-un-Nebuweh*, *Tefsír-i-Kebír* by Fakhr-ud-Dín Rázi, and *Heyat-ul-Qulub*. The first and the last of the authorities give 14, the second one 15 as the number of the conspirators. The first authority mentions 'Ammar to be leading the camel while the others Huzeifeh. Rázi mentions the incident as having occurred during the march back from *Tebúk*. For our purpose it is immaterial, for, the Prophet, then, had left 'Ali as Governor at *Medinah* and declared him his Caliph and likened him to Moses' Aaron.
- (o) A Shiah authority can, of course, have no binding force on non-Shiehs. The fact is merely given here to appreciate its value in the light of actual facts as and when they disclose themselves later on.

They had embraced Islam but it was too new to them to have been fully grasped or assimilated; they were too new to Islam to have changed their habits and inherited nature. Time alone could mould the hard material into shape. Nations like Rome can not be built in a day.

At the time, the flock of Islam could well be divided into several sub-divisions. There were men who had been trained and bred up in Islam since pliable childhood, for instance, 'Alí; there were scholars who had studied Islam and adopted it, for instance Selmán, the Persian savant; there were men who, on account of personal contact with the Prophet, liked him and took up his views, for instance, Abú Biker; there were others who feeling a sudden psychological change in the Prophet's presence saw themselves drawn by a superior force of his personal magnetism, for instance 'Umer; there were yet others who touched by the Prophet's kindness and mercy had adopted his faith, for instance 'Adí bin Hátim.^p As with persons so was the case with tribes. There were tribes that had embraced Islam for fear of its arms or stuck to it for safety or booty, for instance Abú Sufiyán bin Hereb and his Meccans; others were neither afraid nor greedy but being entirely hedged round by Islam and enveloped by Islamic atmosphere found idolatry futile or impossible and thought it good to adopt the new creed, for instance the Bení Theqíf, of Táyif.^q With a bit of more training they could be assimilated and absorbed in Islam but till then they could well be expected to like a relapser to the unrestricted ways of their libertine fathers and avenge the deaths of their kinsmen that had fallen under the Muslims' arms. Such

[p] Ch. 21. P. 9 [q] Ch. 21. P. 3 [r] Ch. 44. P. 2

discordant, disaffected elements can be expected to be and will always be found in all new societies; they will naturally gravitate to each other as they did in Islam.

4. The Prophet's power was too tempting to have left the idea of appropriating it, at the cost of any ancestral creed, confined to the frank bosom of the Temptation, brave chief of the Bení 'Ámir who offered to accept Islam in exchange for the Caliphate.^s Many a Arab must have thought the thought of the chief. There were men who had already begun looking askance at the increasing confidence the Prophet was reposing in 'Ali.^t The Prophet's recognition of 'Ali's services had been daily becoming more pronounced and more and more significant. On his way to Tebúk he had likened 'Ali to Moses' vizir and constituted him his Caliph,^u he had superceded Abú Biker and declared that 'Ali, alone, could do what he himself^v ought to do, and then followed the ceremony and proclamation at Khumm.^w This must have set the ambitious athinking furiously. The 'Aqbeh^x incident was, therefore, not a surprise. It could not have been an isolated freak but must have been a link in a chain of a formulated idea.

It would be the height of absurd credulity to believe that all who professed Islam were sincere and steadfast in the Faith, as it would be to suppose that there was no personal ambition amongst them or that there were no parricides ready to destroy the Prophet at the altar of political purposes.

[s] Ch. 21. P. 8 [t] Ch. 21, P. 7 [u] Ch. 22, P. 3

[v] Ch. 24. P. 1 [w] Ch. 26. P. 4 [x] Ch. 28, P. 2

CHAPTER XXIX.

"THE MAN"

'Ali's endowments—charitable charity—humane charity—his door in the mosque—the Apostle's inseparable Companion.

1. Throughout the Islamic world 'Ali is known as much for his charity as for any other of his many and great attributes. For God he renounced his sacredotal and secular coronet of a Meccan chieftain, for His Apostle he sacrificed his popularity among his playmates,^y for the Faith he lay under the swords of a united Mecca to enable the prophet to fly with his life.^z He gifted to his dead adversary, 'Amr bin 'Abd wed, the invaluable armour.^a It has been estimated that his endowments would pay, if asseseed at 2½ p. c., (Islamic rate of taxation) forty thousand gold Dinárs.^b

In an age of large capitalistic endowments, it is not proposed to catalogue and detail 'Ali's charities lest he should be taken to be doling them out from his surplus hoardings. His share in the booty^c he never kept with him but endowed it in public charities. He maintained himself on his wages as a day labourer. He lived in voluntary poverty and loved it. It is, therefore, proposed to narrate here not what he gave but how he gave it.

[y] Ch. 8 [z] Ch. 12. P.P. 3-4, Ch. 13. P.P. 1-2

(a) Ch. 19. P. 13

(b) Imâm Ahmed bin Henbel, in el Menâgeb. Muhibb Tabri in his Riâz-un-Nezereh fi Fezayil-il 'Ashreh.

(c) For the richness of the booty see Ch. 44. P.P. 3-4, 14, Ch. 52. P. 2.

2. A plot of land had come to him as a share of the booty. He employed labourers to set the farm in order and paid them out of his earnings. Discovering in Charitable the farm a filled up well—a valuable find in charity, Arabia where wells are deep and so expensive to build—the labourers ran to ‘Ali with the good news, to hear him say, “convey the good news to the owner of the land...” ‘Ali had endowed the property in charity.

From Khumm ‘Ali came home to find his sons, Hasan and Husain seriously ill. ‘Ali vowed to observe three fasts by way of thanksgiving, should the Almighty grant them health. Fátiméh vowed similarly. The boys recovered and their parents observed the fasts. ‘Ali promised to work for 3 days for a Jew and got from him grain, as advance-wages. The fasting ‘Ali worked the whole day, the fasting Fátiméh grinded the corn at the hand-mill, kneaded the flour and baked bread. The Sun set and the family sat down to break the fast. Hark, a needy beggar’s voice at the door. ‘Ali laid down the morsel to say to his noble consort, “Good and Faithful lady, child of the best of men! Do you hear at the door the needy voice of hunger that claims our attention. Every deed returns to the doer.”

“My cousin!” replies Fátiméh, “I appreciate your idea and act upto it, I shall prefer the *needy* to my *self*. May the feeding of the hungry place me among the good”...The visitor had his meal and ‘Ali’s family went without it.

The next day they observed the second fast and in the evening they sat down to break it. An orphan call-

ed at the door. "Fátimeh!" said 'Ali, "child of the Good Leader, daughter of the Prophet of unblemished name! The Lord has sent an orphan as our *guest*, charitable is one who shows charity."

"Ali", replied she, "my little ones are hungry but I shall entertain the *guest*. I shall prefer Allah to my *self* and my children." The poor repast was handed over to Allah's *guest* and the family again slept hungry.

The third evening came a person in duress who cried at 'Ali's door.

"Fátimeh, daughter of the Prophet, child of the chief of admitted greatness! Here is a prisoner at our door who is under the Divinely-guided Prophet's duress. He is in chains and fetters and hungry. The one who feeds today shall, tomorrow, be rewarded by the great God", said 'Ali. "Three days' fasting", responded Fátimeh, "3 days' work and grinding has weakened me and sored my hands, my stomach is empty, and so is that of my children. I shall feed Thy *guest*, but my Lord! feed Thou my children". The bounteous hand was not withheld...the family again went to bed without food.

Philanthropy is good and so are the philanthropists. All praise to them, for they are the emblems of Divine Beneficence. The Qurán would not be a Revealed Book had the incident, unparalleled in the annals of man, not been immortalized. The good God perpetuated it, for human guidance, in one of the most beautiful and ele-

gant chapters of the Book.^d

3. During the same year (10 H=631—632. A. D.) the Prophet ordered all doors (with the exception of Doors in the 'Alī's) opening into the mosque to be closed mosque, up. 'Umer bin Khettāb requested permission for a hole in the wall to be able to see the Prophet's comings in and goings out.

4. Explaining that the order had been promulgated in pursuance of a Divine Command the Prophet dis- The allowed any opening even to the extent of Inseparables, a pin-hole. After the order had been complied with only two doors continued open in the mosque, the one was the Prophet's and the other 'Alī's. "I can not be away from 'Alī, nor can 'Alī be away from me," is the reason given by the Prophet for exempting 'Alī from the operation of the order.^e

(d) Surnamed "The Man", (Al-Insan, or ad-Dahr) Part XXXIX. Chapter LXXVI, v. 7-12 refer to the incident. Vide Tefsirs Keshshaf and Beizawi.

7. They fulfil vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide.
8. And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive.
9. We only feed you for Allah's sake, we desire from you neither reward nor thanks.
10. Surely we fear from our Lord a stern distressful day.
11. Therefore Allah will guard them from evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness.
12. And reward them, because they were patient, with garden and silk.

(e) Rauza-tus-Safa, Menāqeb Murtezawī, Nisāyi and Hākim.

CHAPTER XXX

EXPEDITION TO MUTEH.

The Prophet attends to education and administration of the country—the Pretenders and their significance—Usámeh's expedition to Múteh—Abû Biker wants to but not permitted to stay behind—The Prophet's curse—'Aiyshéh advises her father to stay behind—none is allowed to attend the Prophet—Abû Biker seeks to lead the prayers but the Prophet arrives to do it.

To organise the provinces and to instruct them in the Faith the Prophet sent out officers during the last year (11. H=632—633. A. D.) of his life.

1. Three pretenders, claiming Divine Commission, arose in the country. Aswed was a Yemenite chief who, within a career of 4 months, usurped the land and faith of Yemen and Nejrán. He occupied the capital of Yemen, murdered the Prophet's representative and married his widow who got him murdered in turn. With the death of the pretender the people returned to Islam. Museilimeh, of the Bení Heníf and Tuleiheh, of the Bení Asad, established themselves in the provinces of Yemámeh and Nejrán respectively, gained great power and following and could not be suppressed till during Abû Biker's Caliphate.^f The rise and phenomenal success of these pretenders shows how loosely religion hung on the Arabs and how necessary it was to consolidate them in the principles of Islam

2. To seek the long-delayed reparation for the murder of Islam's envoy^g in Syria an expedition was set afoot under Usámeh, the youthful son of zeid^h who had died fighting at Múteh. The Pro-

To Múteh,

phet, being ill at the time, detained 'Alí and 'Abbás to attend on him. Abú Biker, 'Umer bin Khettáb and 'Uthmán bin 'Effánj also wanted to, but were not permitted, to stay behind. To Abú Biker's request, the Prophet is reported to have replied, "permitting you to remain behind as a nurse will add to the troubles of my *Ahl ul Beit*".^k The army marched out and bivouaced at Jorf, a few miles from the City, but never moved farther for, "Abú Biker and others" kept "coming and going to see the Prophet".^l The Prophet was too unwell to move but apprised of the army's dilatoriness, supporting himself on the shoulders of 'Alí and 'Abbás, staggered out to bring home to the people the urgency of the expedition.* He not only exhorted the people to march out but said, "march on under Usámeh; cursed be he who lags behind". The Prophet further took the precaution of commissioning Sad bin 'Obádeh to call at each house and send the soldiers off to Usámeh. But the news of the Prophet's illness becoming serious soon dissolved the army.

3. The Prophet's wife 'Áyesheh had asked her father, Abú Biker, not to go from the City.^m During the Prophet's illness a message came from the congregation, lady's house (where the Prophet was for the being) that Abú Biker should lead the public prayer because the Prophet was too ill to do so in person. Some of the congregation disputed Abú Biker's authority on

(i) Ibn Kheldún. (j) Ibn Kheldún, Rauza tus Sefa.

(k) Ibid, Menáhij un Nebuweh. (l) Ibn Kheldún

Mentioning Abú Biker's trying to lead public prayers the author of Manágeb Murtazewi says that it was his daughter, 'Aiyeshah, the Prophet's wife, who had advised him not to leave the City. * Ibn Kheldún.

[m] Menágeb Murtezewi

the ground that he was to go out under Usámeh. Bilál, the negro *Muezzin*, went to verify the matter. Bilál went and accosting the Prophet's cousin, Fezl bin 'Abbás in the house requested him to get him the information. Fezl was surprised and asked in return, "but has not Abú Biker marched off under Usámeh?"ⁿ Abú Biker had, in the meantime, started leading the prayer wherein some had joined while others stood waiting till his authority was authenticated. Though very weak, the Prophet, leaning on 'Ali's and Fezl's shoulders, appeared in the mosque to lead the prayer in person. The congregation gave up Abú Biker and said their prayer with the Prophet, Abú Biker also did the same.^o

[n] Hayát ul Qulûb

(o) Tabrí A them Kûfi, Menâqeb Murtezevi, Hayat ul Qulub

The second and third authority *opines* that the Prophet's appearance at the function shows that the message for Abu Biker to lead the prayer was without the Prophet's authority; the last authority states it as a fact.

Ibn Kheldûn says that Abu Biker completed the function and that he did want to retreat but the Prophet "pressed his shoulder", meaning him to go on to the end. It says, also, that the Prophet too prayed under Abu Biker's lead. The whole version, however, is highly improbable, being derogatory to the Apostolic dignity.

The incident was referred to, at Theqifeh, as an argument for Abu Biker's Caliphate. The argument, however, was withdrawn and the fact admitted as is given in the text Ch 36. P. 4

The Shiabs argue an impeachment. Having been ordered to march off under Usameh and having been refused permission for staying behind, he did stay behind inspite of the Prophet's curse on those who did not march off with Usameh. Without the Prophet or his family knowing of his presence in the City he sought to lead public prayers at which the Prophet, in the weakness of his death-illness, appeared to function personally and then used it as an argument at Theqifeh to secure the Caliphate. The Shaihs scent a motive in each of the acts and the combination of the acts.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE WILL THAT...COULD NOT BE MADE.

The "Ocean of Learning" weeps for the interruption offered to the Prophet—The Prophet lets in people to his bed, advises and answers questions—asks for writing materials to write for men's guidance—'Umer obstructs—and is turned out together with others, for rowdyism—the Prophet not delirious—the Prophet's probable intention—facts before and after the incident show that the Prophet wanted to write what 'Umer knew and wanted to remain unwritten—a Shiah conjecture,

The chapter bears a sad head-line, sadder still are its contents. The memory of the incident, the "rowdyism" round the Prophet's bed, the wanton obstruction offered to the bed-ridden Prophet's desire of reducing his parting behests into writing in order to keep the people on "the right path" and to keep them from "going astray", the spiritual loss the obstruction did to the cause of "good guidance" made Ibn 'Abbás, "the Ocean of Learning" among the Companions to weep till the pebbles on the ground he sat on became wet with his copious tears. The world has admitted the right of every man of affairs to make a last declaration of his wishes and no man has a right to stand in the way. It is entirely a posthumous matter to see how far those last wishes are or are not to be acted upon. The chapter relates the Prophet's desire of making a will concerning the future of his people and reducing it into writing.

1. Four days before his death, the Prophet *admitted* people into his presence, advised and instructed them a Writing *good deal* and *replied* to questions, *explained* materials. *problems* and then said, 'bring me paper and writing materials that I may write for you to keep you

from *going astray*'. Those present differed amongst themselves in the matter of bringing him the writing materials. 'Umer bin Khettáb said, "The Book is sufficient for us. This fellow is *delirious*"...the Prophet *rebuked*, "Get ye gone, rowdyism is not allowed in the presence of Prophets"...after they had left the Prophet felt pain and swooned.^p

Much breath has been wasted and more ink spent both by the protagonists and antagonists of the interrupters whose conduct was characterised by the Prophet as rowdy. Oblivious of the links before or after the incident, the controversialists have mostly confined themselves to its religious or academic aspect, and this has given rise to much confused thinking. A co-relation of facts will form a chain of historical facts requiring very little academic discussion.

2. It will be noted that the Prophet had been "advising and instructing a *good deal*", and no body thought of delirium. It was only when writing materials were demanded that delirium was spoken of by 'Umer. The Prophet's audience consisted of two groups; one was for supplying him with ink and pen and the other was against it; the first party never thought him delirious and the second party never suggested him to be so. The two parties differed in the matter of complying with the demand on some ground other than that of delirium. The difference was already there among the audience but no body suggested delirium as the ground of their difference. It was 'Umer

(P) Ibn Kheldun, Ibn 'Asâker, Ibn Sa'd, *Sehih Muslim* and *Sehih Bukhâri*.

who made the suggestion which was immediately and conclusively negated by the Prophet. The Prophet reprimanded the audience for being rowdy. Not only that; he showed that he was conscious of the slight to his dignity and told his audience that they were guilty of a breach of etiquette and had transgressed against the rules of respect due to a Prophet's presence. Finally, he turned the impudent crowd out of his house for their rowdyism. All this knocks the bottom out of 'Umer's theory of delirium. If it was delirium why did they leave the house in obedience to the delirious command.

3. The Prophet had "advised and instructed" his audience and then demanded writing materials to write that people may not "go astray". He was thinking and speaking in his Apostolic capacity. Why should a portion of the audience or 'Umer want to stand in the way? Fasts, prayers, charities, religious rituals; the way to God, so on and so forth, is the Apostle's province. Would 'Umer go against bringing these in writing? Was the Prophet going to write these? No; this was already in the Book.

The Prophet's
probable in-
tention.

4. People may prefer to supply the writing materials and wait till the alleged delirium was over and get the writing when the Prophet returned to consciousness. Hence it was that 'Umer supplemented his suggestion of delirium with the remark that "the Book is sufficient for us". It conveyed to the audience that they need not be anxious about the proposed writing and also to the Prophet that, in the presence of the Book, the writing he thought so necessary to give would be a mere superfluity which may or may not be held binding, at least by a section of the people.

An idea.

Why, however, should a portion of the Prophet's audience or 'Umer be so averse to the writing?

The Book surely was not going to be reduced into writing over again and in the presence of the dying Prophet, nor could 'Umer be so much against it. Something apart from the Book was, therefore, proposed to be written. The contents of a document remain unknown till the document is actually written. 'Umer and the portion of the audience, however, knew something about the Prophet's mind which led them to stand in the way of the proposed writing. That was his interest or the interest of a group of the Prophet's audience.

5. The Prophet had, on the occasion of the "Call to the Kinsmen", declared 'Alī his Vizier, vicegerent, brother The Prophet's mind. and representative^(q) on his way to Tebūk he had declared him his Caliph as Aaron was to Moses.^(r) He had, in supercession of Abū Biker, appointed 'Alī to officiate for himself on the occasion of the "Declaration of Discharge".^(s) He had, at Khumm^t, proclaimed him the *Maula* of his people. Did the Prophet want to strengthen his word and conduct by giving it in black and white. Did the Prophet want to write as to who should, after him, lead the affairs of the State?

6. 'Umer, sometime later, expressed to Ibn Abbās the Hāshimite, the undesirability of combining the Apostolate and the Caliphate in the same family.^(u) 'Umer's mind. Was it the interest of this class of thinkers that he was seeking to save from getting intricate on

(q) Ch. 9 PP. 2-5 (r) Ch. 32 P. 3 (s) Ch. 3. P. 1

(t) Ch. 26 P. 4 (u) Ch. 57. PP. 2-3. To form a connected chain of an idea see Ch. 35.

account of the Prophet's writing.

7. The Shiah's argue that the Prophet wanted to write down the Caliphate to 'Alí and, therefore, a differently-minded party sought to stand in the way of the Prophet's desire of expressing his mind, on the occasion, in the form of a document.

The Shiah's.

CHAPTER XXXII. AT DEATH'S DOOR.

Fátimeh's last talk with her father—her character—the Prophet visits the graves of his dead friends—the Prophet's last address to his congregation—'Ali receives the Prophet's last words, gifts and burden—'Ali is asked to rationalise Islam.

1. The Prophet's malady grew worse. Fátimeh came to see him. 'Áyeshah used to say, "she never saw Father and any one resembling the Prophet more in daughter. sweetness of temper than his daughter. He treated her always with respectful tenderness. When she came to him he used to rise up, go towards her, take her by the hand and kiss it and would seat her in his own place. Their meeting on this occasion is thus related by Aiyesha in the traditions preserved by Abul Fidá. 'Welcome my child', said the Prophet, and made her sit beside him. He then whispered something in her ear, at which she wept. Perceiving her affliction, he whispered something more and her countenance brightened with joy. 'What is the meaning of this', said she to Fátimeh, 'the Prophet honours thee with a mark of confidence^v never bestowed on any of his wives'. 'I can not disclose the secret of the Prophet of God', replied Fátimeh. Nevertheless, after his death, she declared that at first he announced to her his impending death but, seeing her weep, consoled her with the assurance that she would shortly follow him and become a princess in heaven, among the faithful of her sex".^w

2. At midnight, passing through the streets of the

(v) Compare 'Umer's words to the Prophet, Ch. 21. P. 7.

(w) Life of Mahomet, by W. Irving.

sleeping city, he paid a visit to his friends, Companions and the dead and soldiers who had befriended him in per- friends. secution, extended their hospitality in his exile and fought and died for him in the battles of the Faith. "Greeting them in their slumber of death he apostrophised them, 'Rejoice, ye dwellers in the grave.' More peaceful is the morning to which ye shall awaken than that which attends the living. Happier is your condition than theirs. God has delivered you from the storms with which they are threatened and which shall follow one another like the watches of a stormy night, each darker than that which went before".^x

3. Finding strength to come to the mosque he addressed the congregation, "if any of you have aught upon his conscience, let him speak out, that I may Farewell. ask God's pardon for him". One who had passed for a devout Muslim, touched by the Prophet's words stood forth to confess that he was a liar and a Hypocrite. 'Out upon thee', cried Umer, 'why dost thou make known what God had suffered to remain concealed?' But Mohammad turned rebukingly to Umer. 'Oh son of Khettab,' said he, 'better it is to blush in this world, than suffer in the next'. Then lifting his eyes to heaven and praying for the self-accused, 'Oh God!' exclaimed he, 'give him rectitude and faith, and take from him all weakness in fulfilling such of Thy commands as his conscience dictates'. Again addressing the congregation, 'is there any one among you, said he, 'whom I have stricken, here is my back, let him strike me in turn. Is there any one whose character I have aspersed, let him now cast reproach upon me. Is there any one from whom I have

(x) Life of Mahomet, by W. Irving.

taken aught unjustly, let him now come forward and be indemnified".^y

Sixty-three eventful years had he lived in turbulent Arabia and there was none who had a charge to make or reparation to demand. 'Akásheh only stood up to complain that once, on a journey, the Prophet, in whipping his camel, had, accidentally, whipped him. The Prophet offered his person to be whipped in return. 'Akásheh said that he, then, was bare-backed. 'Ali who had so often exposed himself to ward off trouble from the Prophet, now offered his person to be whipped, instead of the ailing and weak Prophet. The avenger insisted upon striking the Prophet. The Prophet laid bare his back. Whip in hand, the Arab stepped forth, reached up and kissed the bare back of the good Apostle.

4. The Prophet retired to his bed. 'Ali was in
 'Ali, the
 Prophet's
 executor. constant attendance, the Prophet called him
 and seated him beside himself and said, "will
 you be my executor".

"Yes, by all means".

The Prophet spoke to Bilál, the negro Muezzin, "fetch me my sword, helmet, armour, girdle and camel".

Bilál brought the articles. "Accept this from me," said the Prophet to 'Ali, "this is my personal property, none shall object to the gift".^z

The parting gift of a dear friend and Master to a friend and Disciple. The sovereign of all Arabia, Mohammed, possessed no other personal effects, he had

(y) *Ibid.*

(z) Menàqeb Murtezewi, Hayât-ul-Qulûb.

nothing else to give and he gave 'Ali all he had. It was a poor man's gift to a poor man—'Ali accepted and cherished the sacred souvenir of the Master. The Prophet's sword could be possessed and wielded only by 'Ali and by none else. In sorrow and pride and under the shadow of the coming loneliness of spirit 'Ali heard the remaining part of the Apostle's last wishes. At the beginning of Mohammad's career 'Ali had heard his dictates in the cave of Hirá; at the end of Mohammad's career, 'Ali was called, in the solitude of impending death, to hear Mohammad's last behests. "I borrowed from the Jew, for equipping Usáme'h's army, pay him. After me you shall be enveloped in troubles, be firm and patient. Finding people engrossed in morbid worldliness, betake yourself to the Kingdom of God".^a "When folks attempt reaching the Lord through diverse and haphazard acts of goodness, you, O'Ali, go ahead of them by the path of Rationalism. When people are steeped in self-mortification by indulging in rituals of worship and conventional charities, you, O 'Ali, exert yourself in discovering the rationale of Religion".^b

The Disciple drank deep in the words of the Master and 'Ali's Master, Mohammad...had joined the "Companionship on High."

(a) Menahij-un Nebuwweh. Military expenditure is a public burden. Mohammad, as a private person, could not be talking to 'Ali, as a private individual, to discharge a public debt. It indicates that the Prophet took 'Ali to be the one who would be, after him, in charge of public affairs.

(b) Avicenna, see also Ch. 41, P. 3.

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE UNATTENDED CORPSE.

The funeral that could well be expected—the actual funeral—
'Ali gives his father's ward the last bath and burial—'Ali bids
adieu to his Master.

1. Mohammad the Prophet is dead. One would
conjure up before his mind's eye a splendid funeral
attended by a grateful nation sunk in uni-
Mourning. versal mourning; a City draped in black, in-
dicative of its profoundest sorrow at the demise of the
Prophet, its greatest citizen who had gone for ever, the
prince and the peasant, the high and the low, vieing with
each other in carrying the sacred coffin to the last rest-
ing place, and thus rendering their last loveful service
and humble homage to the remains of one who was the
builder of their nation, creator of their prosperity, maker
of their country and founder of their Faith.

One would expect to see a grateful nation with
bowed head and humble heart condoling and consoling
the bereaved family, and with eyes tearful and voice
sobbing, assuring the Hâshimites that their loss would
be shared and alleviated by the Nation that would con-
tinue to place at their feet its loyalty and grateful affec-
tion.

2. But alas! the one who expects this is destined
to a shocking disillusionment. The Nation left their
Prophet's corpse unattended. They left to
Burial. the Hâshimites the burial of their dead kins-
man, Mohammad.

The Hâshimites interred the remains of their deca-
sed relative who was the Muslims' Prophet. They were

seven who took part in the funeral. Their names have been gratefully preserved in history viz 'Alí bin Abú Tálib, the Prophet's uncle Abbás, his sons Fezel and Qethem, Usáneh, the son of the Prophet's freedman Zeid, Sheqrán and Abú Telheh Ansári.^c 'Alí bathed the dead Prophet, Abú Telheh Ansári dug the grave. 'Alí and Qethem placed the Prophet in the grave.

Nourished and nurtured in orphaned childhood, encouraged, protected and succoured in the early days of his Mission by 'Alí's father; believed, saved, and assisted by Abú Tálib's son, the Prophet was destined to receive his burial also at the hands of 'Alí—at what cost to himself, would be evident from the words of the Ansár chief^d who said that if 'Alí had been present at Theqifeh, not more than a couple of persons would have voted the Caliphate to his rival.

3. As he bathed^e and shrouded the deceased Prophet in his last attire, 'Alí said, "my parents be your sacrifice, in your death cease for us Apostolate and heavenly Revelation. Your death is for us a great calamity, even as your being with us was a shield against all calamities. You have enjoined on us patience and forbidden us lamentation or we would drain out our tears to the last. My parents be thy sacrifice, remember us to your Lord and forget us not'.^f

(c) Abul Fida. (d) Ch 37. P. 1. Ch. 40. P. 6.

For 'Alí's reply to the chief see Ch. 40. P. 7.

(e) A prophecy fulfilled. See Ch. 2. P. 4.

(f) Nehj-ul-Belâghieh.

CHAPTER XXXIV. AMBITION RUNS RIOT.

Tribal ambition—Abù Biker arrives—'Umer promises—death to him who speaks of the demise—Abù Biker speaks of electing a Caliph—Abul Heishem counter mands—discord—'Abbàs and Abù Sufiyàn offer fealty to 'Alí—'Alí in mourning—his attitude.

1. At the demise of the Prophet ambition rampant in the City. While 'Alí with his seven collaborators Schemes of Succession. was preparing the funeral, sordid Arabs outside the walls of the dead Prophet's house, were settling the scheme of political supremacy. "Muslims and Munafiques, began discussing and scheming. In every nook and corner of the City arose a gathering and everly clique held its conference.^b The Ummeyyâdes congregated at 'Uthmán bin 'Effan's,ⁱ the Bení Zohreh conferred with Sad bin Abí Weqqás and 'Abdur Rahmán bin 'Auf,^j and Abù Biker^k was discussing things with Useid bin Huzeir, an Ansár chief of the Aus tribe, when news of the Prophet's death reached^l him. 'Umer bin Khettáb offered his allegiance to Abù 'Obeideh bin Jarráh who refused the courtesy because he knew some Muhájirs and an Ansár group of the Aús tribe (headed by Useid bin Huzeir) inclined towards Abù Biker.^m

2. The Prophet's wife 'Aiyeshah sent word to her

[g] Literally the hypocrites—those who had adopted Islam from motives other than sincere. Ch. 15. Foot note. Ch. 17. P. 2.

[h] Athem Kúfi. [i] Afterwards Caliph III. [j] Kitab-ul-Imâmat-vas-siyásat by Ibn Quteibeh. [k] Caliph I.

(l) Ensán ul 'Ayûn. (m) Rauza tul Ahabâb.

father Abú Biker who, in his village sunhs (3 miles from 'Umer's mad Medineh), was closetted with Useid bin grief Huzeir. At the news of his demise the citizens came to the Prophet's door where they found 'Umer bin Khettáb, sword in hand, furiously protesting that the Prophet was immortal, and, therefore, not dead and that he would cut off any body's head who talked of his demise.ⁿ Here, Abú Biker arrived, quieted 'Umer, gave out the truth of the Prophet's death, advised men to *avert discord* by agreeing on the leadership of a suitable person, and passed on into the house where 'Alí with others was preparing the funeral.

3. It was before or after this that a public-spirited chief and poet, Abul Heishem bin Teihán drew the wanted crowd's attention to the seriousness of the concord situation and in forceful verse deplored the turn the public mentality had taken. He told the crowd that false prophets^o were up to spoil their faith, that they had fought so many battles of Islam in which so many men had fallen at their hands and that kinsmen of the slain were eager to avenge^p those deaths and that it was therefore, necessary to ward off the double danger by agreeing on the leadership of a suitable personage

(n) There are two ideas about 'Umer's conduct. The one is that his sabre-rattling was due to mad grief. The other view, as propounded, by the famous *savant* Ibn Alí? Hedíd in his great commentary on Nehj ul Belágheh, is that 'Umer wanted to conceal the factum of the Prophet's death till Abú Biker's arrival. This last view is also shared by the Shiáhs and appears to be more in consonance with 'Umer's common-sense which was all too strong to think of the Prophet's im-mortality.

or they would be a shepherdless herd. Having thus described the situation the poet, cognizant of the factious spirit^a that was afoot, gave proof of his open mind by steering clear of party-politics. He left the various claims and ambitions unfavoured and unprejudiced by omitting to particularise or prefer any individual or party. He merely said that 'Alí or Abú Biker or some one from amongst the Ansárs or the Muhájirs should be placed at the helm of affairs to save the Faith from dangers^r ahead. The people, therefore, dispersed to consider, discuss and formulate their ideas regarding the Caliphate.^s

4. Finding ambition running riot the Prophet's venerable uncle 'Abbás talked to Abú Biker and then to Abbás and Abú Sufiyán for Alí. 'Umer bin Khettáb if they knew the Prophet's wishes regarding the Caliphate and receiving the reply in the negative came to 'Alí and offered to swear allegiance to him, saying, "if I do it, news shall go round that the Prophet's uncle has given his allegiance to the Prophet's cousin and the matter shall get settled all at once".^t Ibn Abí'l Hedid records, in his famous commentary on *Nehj ul Belágheh*, that it was at the suggestion of Abú Sufiyán that 'Abbás had, thus, sought to seal the matter. Abú Sufiyán is reported to have said that his allegiance meant the fealty of the Beni 'Abd Menáf which meant the fealty of all the Qureish and, therefore, of all Arabia. 'Abbás and Abú Sufiyán both went, therefore, to 'Alí to offer him fealty.

5. Mohammad is dead and 'Alí in mourning. Whatever others may chose to do, 'Alí, the "brother,

(q) P. I, *Supra* (r) *Athem Kūfi and Rauzā nus Sefa*,

(s) *Ibid* (t) *Kitāb ul Imāmet vas Siyāset*, by Ibn Quteibeh.

Alí's reply. vizier and vicegerent" of Mohammad considers it sacrilegious to attend to the world and its politics until he has done last honours to the remains of his guardian, guardian-angel, Chief and Prophet. Keeping himself busy in preparing the funeral he brushed aside the proposal of 'Abbás and Abú Sufiyán with the words, "but who is there to contest the Caliphate with me".^u

This shows that 'Alí considered his claims to the Caliphate absolutely indisputable.

(u) Kitáb ul Imâmet vas Siyyaset, by Ibn Quteibeh,

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ANSAR MIND.

The Ansárs knew 'Ali's claims—also the anti-'Ali party—Medineh's right to determine its future governance.

1. The Ansárs knew full well 'Ali's pre-eminent claims to the Caliphate and were, therefore, quite prepared to recognise them. They knew that:

'Ali was the Prophet's first cousin and the consort of Fátimeh^v, the Prophet's pet and only living child, and the father of her infant sons. 'Ali was the son of Abú Tálib, the Prophet's uncle, nourisher^w and protector, but for whose active support Mohammad would have died and his mission withered unblossomed. 'Ali's brother Jafer had, in the early days of Islam, escorted to Abyssinnia^x the petty band of Muslims away from the killing persecution of the Meccans and, when the Qureish persecutors sought their extradition, it was his memorable eloquence that so won the heart of the Negus as to make him refuse the Qureish request for extradition. Thus had Jafer saved the Muslim refugees from falling into the hands of the Qureish and, therefore, from utter annihilation. The Ansárs also knew that 'Ali was the first Muslim, the only one among Muslims who had never been un-Islamic.^y It was he who had been changing places with Mohammad to beguile enemy espionage when Abú Tálib's castle was besieged by the Qureish.^z When united Mecca had wanted to end Mohammad's

(v) Ch. 16 P, 10, (w) Ch. 3 PP, 10, 11. Ch. 6, PP, 1-2 Ch. 11 PP, 1, 8-12 Ch. 12. P. 10

(x) Ch. 11 PP, 3, 5 (y) Ch. 7 P, 3, (z) Ch. 11 P, 10,

life it was 'Alí who, by consenting to occupy Mohammad's condemned bed, had made the Flight possible and had, thus, saved the Prophet for the world.* First by believing and then by following the Prophet to Medineh, 'Alí had renounced civil and sacerdotal chieftainship of Meccah that was his, by right of inheritance. after his father Abú Tálib. 'Alí was Mohammad's first body-guard^b and the greatest soldier of Islam who fought under Mohammad only and had never been subordinated to any other man. He was the soldier who had received from the Prophet the great and enviable compliment of being the one "who is a fighter and never a deserter",^c the only one who, being the sincerest of iconoclasts, was given the unique honour of rising high on the Prophet's shoulders to fell the highest placed and most pretentious of stone-gods in the Kabeh and dedicating it for ever to the worship of the God of Abraham.^d 'Alí was Mohammad's business-representative to wind up the latter's business at Meccah after the Flight.^e 'Alí was the Apostle's politico-religious functionary who was selected, in preference to all others,^f to read to Arabia the important chapter of the Qurán and proclaim the "Declaration of Discharge". When the Prophet was challenged to test, like the Arabs, the truth of the two religions by invoking God's curse of the follower on the false one, it was 'Alí who had been selected as a colleague by the Prophet to vindicate the truth of Islam against the Christian Doctors of Nejrán.^g All doors opening into the Prophet's mosque were closed up with the exception of two. doors, one was the door of the Prophet and the other was

(a) Ch. 12, PP. 3-4, Ch 13 PP. 1-2 (b) Ch. 8

Ch. 19 PP. 20-23 (d) Ch. 20, P.P. 10-11. (e) Ch 14 P. 2

(f) Ch. 24 P. 1 (g) Ch. 25, PP. 1-2

'Alí's.^h It was 'Alí regarding whom the Prophet had wanted to say things but did not lest Muslims should elevate him to what Christians had elevated Jesus,^l nevertheless, he had said, "'Alí is to me what Aaron was to Moses"^j, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alí is its gate",^k "'Alí is my brother in this world and the Hereafter," "'Alí is my brother, vizier, vicegerent, lieutenant and Caliph".^m When the Prophet left for the dangerous expedition against Tebúk, 'Alí was left incharge of the Capital as vicegerent.ⁿ It was 'Alí of whom the Prophet had proclaimed with pomp and ceremony, at Khumm, "of whomsoever I am the Master 'Alí is his Master".^o

2. The Ansárs knew all this but they knew also that a party was antagonistic to 'Alí and that it had attempted at the Prophet's life^p when he appointed 'Alí vicegerent during the Tebúk expedition or proclaimed him *Maula* at Khumm. The Ansárs knew, too, that to avoid disruption, the Prophet, in his last days, had wanted to write down a will which was not allowed to be done.^q They knew, also, that the Prophet had, during his last illness, ordered a march under Usáneh bin Zeid and men had sought to avoid going out, and inspite of being specifically refused permission to stay back^r and inspite of the Prophet's curse on all who did not march off under Usáneh,^s men had avoided leaving the City. The Ansárs inferred that men stuck to the City because they did not want to let the Prophet die during their absence and while 'Alí was

(h) Ch, 29 P, 3 (i) Ch, 24, P, 3 (j) Ch, 22. P. 3,

(k) The Spirit of Islam [l] Ch, 15, P, 3 [m] Ch, 9 PP, 3-5

[n] Ch, 22, PP, 2-3 [o] Ch, 26, PP, 3-5, [p] Ch, 28 P2. and foot note (n) [q] Ch, 31. P, 1

[r] Ch, 30, P, 2 [s] *Ibid*

present in the Capital. They knew also that men had sought to lead public prayer which the Prophet had arrived to conduct.^t They knew also that a portion of the Ansárs, represented by Useid bin Huzeir, was in negotiation with a portion of the Muhájirs regarding the question of the Caliphate.^u Knowing all these facts and knowing that the question was being discussed all over the City^v and because Abú Biker, at the Prophet's door, had offered it as an open question to be determined by the will of the Nation^w and also because Abú'l Heishem bin el Teihán^x had invited all to come to an amicable decision on the point, the Ansárs proposed to meet at Theqifeh for a discussion of the state of affairs that had arisen.

3. And of all persons the Ansárs were the best entitled to discuss it among themselves and have their thus considered opinion consulted if the Caliph was to be appointed by the will of the nation. To them had the Prophet come as a persecuted refugee. He had, with his Muhájirs, been received by the Ansárs as a friend, entertained and defended as an honoured guest by the self-governing Ansárs. For his good qualities, both moral and political, Mohammad had been tacitly permitted to direct and lead the moral and political affairs of the City which under his great and good guidance rose to be the capital of Arabia. Arabia had been reduced by the City and it was proud of its achievement and of its leader under whose feet it was prepared to kiss the very earth. But in all humility, the City was justified in holding itself an unconquered territory of

[t] Ch, 30 P, 3 [u] Ch, 34 P, 1 [v] *Ibid*

[w] Ch, 34 PP, 2-3 [x] *Ibid*

self-governing citizens. At Mohammad's bidding or the slightest indication of his wishes, it could have subordinated itself to any nominee of his, but failing such nomination, or, if in spite of such nomination, the new ruler was to be the elected of the people, the relations of Mohammad with the City being entirely personal, it had every right of self-determination regarding the question of its future governance, unhampered and uninterfered with by any non-Medinite party. Abu'l Heishem bin el Teihán and Abú Biker had publicly invited discussion and even if they had not, the Ansárs had the moral right and for the matter of that, every right to discuss and consider the question for themselves. Pursuant to this right, the Ansárs prepared to meet in their council-hall (Theqifeh, of the Bení Sáiydeh), 4 miles from the City.

CHAPTER XXXVI. ANSARS IN COUNCIL.

Spy Mughireh—informs 'Umer re the Ansars at Theqifeh—'Umer informs Abu Biker and they, with Abu 'Obcideh, go to Theqifeh—the Ansars' mutual jealousy—the Ansars want to forestall schemers—'Oweim speaks for the Prophet's family—Abu Biker speaks for Muhajirs—seeks bargaining against the Prophet's family—the Ansars speak for Ali—'Umer swears fealty at Abu Biker's hand—who else did—opinions.

1. As word went round for the Ansars to meet at Theqifeh, Mughifreh bin Shobeh,^y a Machiavellian diplomat, hurried post-haste to inform 'Umer bin Spying. Khettáb.^z 'Umer sent for Abú Biker who said he was busy in the Prophet's obsequies. 'Umer again sent urgent word that his presence was wanted immediately. He came, was given the details of the information, and the two speeded off to Theqifeh; Abú Obeideh bin Jerráh "followed in the wake".^a Away from the

(y) In the first Caliph's Privy Council, (Ch, 39, P, 2) he is later seen as 'Umer's governor at Besreh; dismissed for adultery and re-appointed governor of Kúfeh, He tried to be important during 'Uthman's selection as Caliph (Ch, 50 P. 2). He tried to misguide 'Alí re Mu'awiyeh and then fled over to the latter, He joined "Aíyesheh's army against 'Alí and then tried to disrupt it (Ch, 71 P 3). At his advice Muawiyeh nominated his profligate son Yazid to be the Caliph, in disregard of the treaty with Hasan. This attempt at monopolising rule resulted in the great tragedy at Kerbala,

(z) Rauza tus sefa. According to another version, given in Rauza tul Ahbab, the informer was an Ansar (probably) of the Aus clan.

(a) Rauza tus sefa, Tabri and Ibn Athír, The information does not seem to have been communicated to any other man in the City. The news of the Theqifeh *coup* come as a surprise to all in the City [Ch, 37, PP, 3, 5-6]

remains of their Prophet and on to Theqifeh the three Muhájirs went to join in the Ansár discussions.

2. In order to fully grasp the mentality of the Theqifeh Ansárs it would be convenient to note here that descendants of a common ancestor the The Aus and Khezrij jealousy. Ansárs were subdivided into two main branches, the Khezrij and the Aus, who, for the last 120 years, had been constantly at war with each other. The Khezrij being more numerous, powerful and influential were the envied of the Aus. Immediately before the advent of the Prophet 'Abdulleh bin Abí Selúl, a Khezrijite chief, was about to be proclaimed king but the coming of the Prophet had diverted public thought into new channels. The advent of the Prophet settled all local disputes and the two tribes began to live amicably with each other, partly because of the harmonising influence of Islam and partly because common leadership of the City becoming vested in the Prophet left the Khezrij no opportunity of lording it over the Aus or giving them any cause for cavil and quarrel. Nay more. The Aus minority, as a matter of fact, gained a status of peaceful equality with the Khezrij majority. With the demise of the Prophet, if the new chief was to be by election, the Khezrij majority was likely to assert its determining force which the ambitious among the Aus wanted to defeat. It was in order to kill this possibility of a Khezrij ascendancy that fratricidal diplomats of the type of Useid bin Huzeir^b and Bashír bin Sad, of the Aus tribe, entered into alliance with a group of Muhájirs. Presence of Useid with Abú Biker,^c Abú Obeideh's reply to Umer^d, spy Mughíreh's or the Ansár messenger's

(b) Ch. 34. P. 1. (c) Ch. 34. P. 2. (d) Ch. 34 P. 1.

errand^e support this view; and this aspect of the case will become more apparent from the proceedings of the Theqifeh gathering.

3. The Ansárs assembled at Theqifeh, Sad bin 'Obádeh, the Khezrij chief, being too ill to move, was brought there in a palanquin. He sat wrapped up in blankets on a diwan specially provided for him. He opened the proceedings with a speech which was repeated aloud to the audience by his son. He enumerated the Ansár services to the cause of Islam and advised them to settle the Caliphate "*before others should pick it up*".^f He was followed by Thábit bin Qeis or his son Khozeima bin Thábit who also spoke to the same effect. Immediately there was a shout to have Sad bin 'Obádeh as the chief. At this Useid bin Húzeir^g pleaded for a Qureish Caliphate. Knowing him to be in negotiation with a Qureish group, they shouted him down. Bashir bin Sad, another Aus chief, proposed self-interest in a more diplomatic manner, "Let the Caliphate go to the Qureish on terms most suitable to you, that is to say, if you do not now have what you desire for, so place it as to make it as good as your own rule".^h Disgusted at the sordid trend of the discussion 'Oweim bin Sáo stood up to remind them that they were forgetting the Prophet and *his family*. "Yours", said he, "was the sword first to strike for the Prophet. Will you be the first, also, to go against his friends and family? Let the Caliphate be in the Prophet's family and keep away from *treachery*".

(e) P. 1. Supra and footnote thereto.

(f) Tabrí and Kitáb-ul-Imámet vas-Siyásat by Ibn Quteibeh.

(g) Ch. 35. P. 2, Ch. 34. P. 2. (h) Athem Kufi

4. It was somewhere here that the Muhájir trio of Abú Biker, 'Umer and Abú 'Obeideh bin Jerráh arrived in the assembly. According to another version they arrived during Thábit's address. Muhájirs' arrival. 'Umer wanted to speak but Abú Biker bade him sit down and spoke what 'Umer found to be his own ideas. Abú Biker appreciated the Ansár services and extolled their qualities but said that the Qureish were the most respected of Arabs and that Arabia was not likely to accept any Caliphate but that of the Qureish,^j that the Muhájirs were the pioneers of Islam, that the Prophet was himself a Muhájir and belonged to "our tribe" and that "we are the Prophet's *relatives*, it is but meet and proper to let us be the chief and you be our ministers, and nothing shall be done but with your assent and advice."^k

Another point advanced for the Qureish was that the Prophet had, during his last illness, deputed Abú Biker to lead public prayers,ⁱ that this delegation of sacredotal authority argued for his Caliphate. Thábit bin Qeis refuted it by saying that instead of substantiating his claim it proved him sinful. The Prophet's appearance had led men to give up Abú Biker who had, then, himself given up the lead. The prayers were led, therefore, by the Prophet. If Abú Biker had been deputed to the task he had failed in its performance. Either he was a derelict or you perjure in attesting to what never occurred. The Muhájirs accepted Thábit's reasoning and withdrew the argument.

5. The offer of ministry indicated that the matter

(i) Ibn Athír, Tabrí and Rauza tul Ahabáb (j) *Ibid*, Rauza tus Sefá. (k) *Ibid*, Síret ul Halbiyyah. (l) Ch. 30. P. 3.

could be negotiated further. The Ansárs, therefore, proposed that to alleviate their fear of retaliation on the part of the Meccans, whose kinsmen had fallen at their hands in the battles of Islam, the Caliphate should be conferred alternately on Muhájir and Ansar incumbents. 'Umer passionately burst forth, "By Allah I shall kill all who oppose us", to which Hobáb bin Munzer, a Khezrij chief, replied equally passionately and advised his townsmen to have their own Caliph and let Muhájirs have their own and, should the Muhajirs persist to the contrary, to expel them from the City at the point of the sword: There was an uproar, the invalid Sad bin 'Obadeh was well nigh crushed under feet. Abú 'Obeideh and Abú Biker pacified the turmoil.^m Quiet and order restored, Abú Biker assured Hobab of the unsoundness of his proposal in view of the high improbability of Arabia accepting Ansar Caliphate and added, "if you can not get it, Arabia will wish for *someone from the Prophet's family*. Your proposal is, thus, likely to upset *affairs both spiritual and secular*".ⁿ Making them understand the hopelessness of their situation he invited them to an advantageous alliance with him, against the Prophet's family and against the wishes of Arabia, by agreeing to the pact: "*ours the leadership, yours the ministry*, nothing to be done without your assent and advice".^o Then turning to Sad bin 'Obadeh Abú Biker inquired if he remembered the Prophet's dictum, "the Chiefs come from amongst the Qureish". The Khezrij affirmed it. Bashír bin Sad,^p an Aus chief, announced that the Prophet being a Muhajir, a Muhajir

(m) Kitáb-ul-Imámet vas Siyâset, by Ibn Quteibeh

(n) Athem Kûfi (o) Rauza tus-Sefá, vide P. 4. *Supra*

(p) P. 3. *Supra* and P. 6.

only could be his Caliph. Abú Biker felicitated this ally for his good sense and, avowing that he was not anxious to get the office for himself, invited them to have 'Umer or Abu 'Obeideh bin Jerrah as Caliph. Both of them admitting Abu Biker's superiority declined the office.

6. As the Muhájirs were claiming superiority the Ansárs said, "Let us all swear allegiance to 'Alí, for he is the Prophet's cousin". 'Umer's "apprehensions were aroused and, fearing discord and opposition, he asked Abú Biker to stretch forth his hand, and forthwith gave his hand in Abú Biker's in token of offering allegiance.¹ Bashír bin Sád, the Aus, said that he would be the first to swear allegiance to the Caliph.² As he did so, Hobáb bin Munzer, the Khezrij, said, "Why, O Bashír! are you so jealous of your cousin Sad bin 'Obádeh?" He added also, "I visualise your children, O Ansárs, not getting even a cup of water a begging at the door of these Muhájirs". Abú Biker asked him not to be so nervous nor think so ill of the Muhájirs, to which Hobáb rejoined, "I am not afraid of you but of him who is to come after you". "In that event you need not follow us, you may, then, have your own Caliph",³ replied Abú Biker.

7. "On that day only the selected ones swore allegiance".⁴ "At first only five men offered fealty".⁵ "The Muhájirs and the Aus eagerly swore allegiance. The Khezrij; were greatly humiliated. Sad bin Obádeh never gave his allegiance to Abú

(q) Tbari (r) Athem Kûfi (s) Rauza-tus-Sefâ, Athem Kûfi, and Kitab-ul-Imamet vas Siyaset, by Ibn Quteibeh;

(t) Rauza-tus-Sefâ. (u) el Farûq, by Shibli Numani.

Biker".^v

8. The Muhájir party left the council, of which, Ans bin Málik, a saintly Ansár, sadly said, "A better day and full of more godly light has never dawned on us than the day of the Prophet's entry in our City, nor have we seen a worse and a gloomier day than the day of his demise. Before we had interred his remains, our hearts darkened, each one of us ignored his convictions and probity".^w

'Umer bin Khettáb said, "Abú Biker's election was a sudden surprise but Allah^x saved us from its mischief".^y

(v) Rauza-tus-Sefa.

(w) Rauza-tus-Sefa and Menàhej-un-Nebuwweh, translation of Medarej-un-Nebuwweh (x) Ch. 47. P. 7.

(y) Commentary on Nehj-ul-Belagheh, by Ibn Abi l Hedid, Sehih Bukhari, see also Ch. 47. PP. 6-8.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE THEQIFEH VERDICT ADJUDGED.

Diplomacy—its defects—Defective result—Dissentients—proposed plebiscite—suburban and provincial dissent.

1. The serpent-windings of the Theqifeh discussion are expressive of the timid nervousness of all the parties.

Theqifeh It was a competition of the Aus, the Khezrij factions. and the Muhájir. The Aus was afraid of the Khezrij^z and, therefore, had secured a favourable alliance with the Muhájir.^a The Khezrij was afraid of the Muhájir^b and the Muhájir was afraid of the Prophet's family and its great popularity among the Arabs.^c By offering ministry^d he had purchased the vote of the Aus and was now anxious to grab a verdict. The proceedings are good enough to stand comparison with any astute diplomatic discussion ever reported but for one defect—the Muhájir gave out too much by trying to frighten the reluctant Ansár with the prospect of "Arabia wishing for *some one from the Prophet's family*"^e to be Caliph. The threat failed in frightening the Ansár because he was not averse to the Prophet's family. The holy Ans bin Malik^f and 'Oweim bin Saed^g had spoken for the Prophet's family and Hobáb bin Munzer created a consternation^h by specifically mentioning the dreaded name of 'Alí who had, euphemistically, been referred to by Abú Biker as "*some one from the Prophet's family*"ⁱ, and constantly and covertly mentioned by the Ansárs "as the Prophet's friends and family".^j Even the Aus

z Ch. 36 P. 2. a Ch. 34. P. 1, 2. Ch. 36. P. 2.

b Ch. 36. P. 5 c Ch. 36. P. 5. d *Ibid* e *Ibid*

f Ch. 36. P. 8. g Ch. 36 P. 3. h Ch. 36. P. 6.

i Ch. 36. P. 5. j Ch. 36. P. 3.

were not averse to 'Alí. Bashír bin Sad, the very same Aus chief who rushed^k fealty to Abú Biker, expressed his tribe's sentiments concerning 'Alí, "had you (O Alí) put forward your claims before the election, no one with the exception of two^m persons, would have gone against you".ⁿ Nay, more. They considered the elevation to the Caliphate of any one other than "*someone* from the Prophet's family" to be an act of *trachery*^o to the memory of the Prophet.

2. It was a misreading of their mind that sought to frighten the Ansárs with the ogre of "Arabia wishing Misunder- for *someone* from the Prophet's family". At stood. once the Ansár saw the game of the Muhájir. If any doubt remained it was dispelled when at the specific mention of 'Alí's name" 'Umer's apprehensions^p were aroused" and he hurried to swear allegiance at the hand of Abú Biker and, content with receiving the allegiance of five^q men only, the Muhájir party hastened out of Theqifeh. This hurry exposed the Muhájirs' assailable point, and the humiliated^r Khezrij would rush for retaliation.

3. Abú Biker did not find his prospects hued very

k Ch. 36. P. 6 1 Abu Biker's election. m Refers to Umer and Abu 'Obeideh, the two Muhajirs who accompanied Abu Biker to Theqifeh or perhaps an extremely small, number. n Ch. 40 P. 6. o. Ch. 36. P.P. 3, 8. Ref. Ans bin Malik and 'Oweim bin Saed. p. Ch 36. P 6, 'Umer, Abu 'Obeideh, the two Mehajirs, Bashir bin Sad and Useid bin Huzeir, the two Aus Ansars make four, the fifth one may have been Mughireh, the Mehajir spy, or the Ausar messenger referred to in P. 1. Ch. 36.

q. Ch. 36. P. 7. r. *Ibid.*

rosy. His claim was based on election. The election had taken place at Theqífeh, four miles from the City. The nation, not even the City, had any notice of the gathering and its purpose. The gathering was merely of the Ansárs in which the Muhájirs were conspicuous by their absence—with the exception of the trio that had secured a verdict in their favour, under circumstances which were not free from suspicion, especially in view of the fact that one^s of them had attempted to conceal the factum of the Prophet's death. The City, the general body of Muhájirs had not been consulted, had not even been informed of, and invited to the meeting.^t The suburbs, the outlying tribes and provinces had had no opportunity of having their say in the matter. Abul Heishem bin el Teihán^u and Abú Biker^v himself had advised all parties to formulate their individual opinions which could be considered at an all-parties' conference, for an amicable decision. The Theqífeh gathering was, thus, in the nature of a preliminary and a party-meeting of the Ansárs that had no claim to finality which could be attained only after it had been considered by an all-parties' constituent assembly. Then again, the Theqífeh verdict could lay claim to no validity, in as much as, the Khezrij in a body had dissented from it. Scarcely had the Prophet breathed his last and hardly had the news of his death had time to reach the public when the nation was confronted with a verdict. This haste tinged the Theqífeh verdict with a sordidness of purpose. It assumed darker colouring in contemporary eyes when they saw the *modus operandi* of its protago-

(s) Ch. 34. P. 2 and footnote thereto

(t) Ch. 36, P. 1 and footnote thereto.

(u) Ch. 34. P. 3. (v) Ch. 34 P. 2.

nists. Graphically describes the Companion, Brá bin 'Ázib, "The Prophet died, shortly after we heard of the gathering at Theqífeh, later we heard that Abú Biker had received allegiance, yet a bit later we saw Abú Biker, 'Umer and Abú Obeideh, with a portion of that gathering, marching onward. They took hold of every passer-by's hand and touched it with Abú Biker's in token of sworn allegiance. When I saw this I was dumb-founded".^w

4. Therefore it was that the City resented the Theqífeh *coup*. Practically all the Muhájirs dissociated themselves from the verdict. The Beni Háshim Dissentients- (the Prophet's family) headed by 'Alí, the Umme-yyádes, headed by the redoubtable Abú^x Sufián, the Beni 'Abd Menáf, headed by 'Uthmán (afterwards Caliph III), the Beni Zohreh, headed by 'Abdur Rehmán bin 'Auf,^y Zubeir bin el 'Awam (Abú Biker's son-in-law), Selmán, the Persian *savant* and soldier, Miqdád, Abú Zer and 'Ammár bin Yásir (the Prophet said, that he loved the last two under Divine Command^z) and Brá bin 'Ázib, all holy Companions, Sad bin 'Obádeh, the Ansár Sheikh of the Khezrij, and Ubeiyyi bin Kab and Utbeh bin Abú Leheb, one and all repudiated the Theqífeh verdict immediately they knew of it.^a Khálid bin Saeed bin el Aás, (subsequently in charge of the Syrian expeditionary forces) was sacked by Abú Biker, for being in league with 'Alí, and 'Uthmán, the leader of the Beni 'Abd-Menáf.^b Utbeh bin Abú Leheb publicly recited verses, "I never suspec-

(w) Commentary on Nehj-ul-Belágheh, by Ibn Abi'l Hedid.

(x) Abul Fidá. (y) Kitab ul Imámet-vas-Siyásat, by Ibn Quteibeh.

(z) Tàrikh ul Khulefa, Sehñh Tirmezi and el Hákim.

(a) Abul Fidá. (b) Ibn Khaldun.

ted rule and sovereignty would pass from the Háshimite and that the Caliphate would not be given to 'Alí, the first Muslim and the first Believer, having expert knowledge of the Qurán and the Prophet's rulings, the one who performed the Prophet's obsequies, and that instead of being offered to 'Alí it would pass on to quite a different person".^c Abú Sufiyán, the Ommeyyáde chief, in a fury, approached 'Alí and said, "the lowest of the Qureish clans can have no pretensions to rulership. In your ('Alí's) support I will inundate the City with cavalry and infantry".^d How little the City expected the verdict may be judged from the fact that Abú Qeháfeh, when told of his son's elevation to the Caliphate, was surprised into asking as to how did it happen, and being told that it was because of his son's venerable years, the happy Abú Qeháfeh said facetiously, "but I am older still. I am his father".^e

5. The City prepared to review the Theqífeh verdict. The very Abul Heishem bin el Teihán, who had ^{Planning a} invited the people to come to an amicable ^{plebeicite.} decision^f regarding the Caliphate, planned, in company with Abú Zer, Selmán the Persian, and others a revision of the Theqífeh verdict. As they were once sitting together, Huzeifeh bin Elimán informed them that already, the "Nation" was arranging to call a general assembly to reconsider the question and that Ubeiyyi bin Kab was in the know of the arrangement. They all, accordingly, went to Ubeiyyi the very night of the Theqífeh day.^g

(c) Abul Fida. (d) Tabri, Seyúti. and Rauza tus-Sefa,

(e) Rauza tus Sefa, Nasikh ut Tawarikh. (f) Ch. 34 P. 3.

(g) Commentary on Nahíl Balachah by Ibn Abi-Hadid

6. The suburban tribes^h and outlying provinces,ⁱ in a body, withheld the payment of taxes.
The country. Practically the whole of Abú Biker's time was taken up in fighting the recusants.^j

CHAPTER XXXVIII. ALI SAVES THE INTEGRITY OF ISLAM.

The City dissentient— haughty Abú Sufiyán scandalised, offers 'Alí his military support—'Ali's position—'Ali sees the danger ahead—and his claims—decides saving Islam's integrity by averting a civil war—rebukes Abú Sufiyan's chaotic designs—'Alí stabilizes the community—'Ali's motive.

1. The entire body of Muhájirs against the Theqífeh *coup*, the Bení Háshim, the spiritual and temporal over-
The Forces
lords of pre-Islamic Arabia from time immemorial and having, since the advent of Islam, the sacred and brilliant halo of being the family of the Prophet and conqueror of Arabia added to their hereditary lustre, refusing to recognise the election, the Bení 'Abd Menáf and the Bení Ummeyyeh, the two premier Meccan clans, second in prestige only to the Bení Háshim, also repudiating the Theqífeh claims, the City taking measures for reconsidering the question of the Caliphate, in the words of Abú Sufiyán, it was "a storm" and a "conflagration" "unsuppressible without bloodshed".^k

2. In the midst of this storm in the brewing which portended a strong and furious outburst capable of
Abú Sufiyán
and
Abú Biker.
carrying away before its cyclonic sweep the Theqífeh verdict and its protagonists, look at stalwart figure of Abú Sufiyán, the hereditary commander-in-chief of the city of the Kabeh, the most aristocratic of Arab aristocracy, proud of a lineage as ancient as the deserts of Arabia, speeding along his way to his

(k) Tārikh Kāmel, by Ibn Athīr and Commentary on Nehj ul

great Hášimite kinsman, 'Alí. Centuries, long and countless, can not claim to have seen him and his ancestors bend before a contemporary. His own submission to the Prophet did not detract an iota from his great pride because Mohammed, the Hášimite, was of the line of the hereditary Masters of the Kabeh, the spiritual and temporal overlords of all Arabs. At the fall of Mecca, therefore, when Abú Sufiýán bent and bowed before Mohammed, there was nothing in it that a born Arab could feel humbled at. But to be subjected to or led by an individual of "the lowest and humblest of the Qureish clans that could have no pretensions to rulership"¹ was unthinkable, revolting and repugnant to the accumulated pride of his ancestors that pervaded his blood. To the mind of this typical Arab noble it was a catastrophe and height of indignity, for he was the head of the Ummeyyádes and the active mind of the Bení 'Abd Menáf.^m Perturbed and furious, hurrying and speeding along, he comes to 'Alí. Angry and scandalised, without ceremony or preface, without ambiguity or equivocation, with his ultra-military brusque frankness he lays bare his mind to 'Alí, "what pretensions to rulership can the humblest of the Qureish clans have".ⁿ "This is a conflagration"^o and "a storm which can not be suppressed without bloodshed";^p "Extend your hand to receive my allegiance",^q for to bow to 'Alí, the Hášimite, was no shame and no slight. And he made the great offer of the assistance of his arms—Abú Sufiýán's arms that the Prophet had had so many years to contend

(1) Tebri, Seyuti and Rauz tus-Sefa. (m) Ch 34 P. P, 4

(n) Tabri, Seyùti, Rauza-tus-Sefa.

(o) *Com on Nehj ul Belagheh* by Ibn Abil Hedid.

(p) Kâmil, by Ibn Athir. (q) Tebri, Seyùti, Ibn Athir.

against. "At your bidding", vehemently spoke Abú Sufiyán, "I shall fill this valley (of Medineh) with cavalry and infantry".^s This was a tempting offer for 'Alí to accept. This was the great price at which Abú Sufiyán assessed his dignity, and this price the great Arab was prepared to pay if 'Alí consented only to wear the crown to which Abú Sufiyán could bow consistently with his honour and prestige.

3. From this outburst of Abú Sufiyán, reports of happenings in the City^t and of the suburban^u and provincial^v feelings 'Alí found himself the pivot of the whole movement, the cynosure of all eyes, the centre of the Muhajir-cum-Ansar^w propaganda. He found himself holding in his hand the key of the whole situation; with a slight turning of the key he could let fall the flood-gates of the stormy torrents of irate Khezrij passions, contemptuous fiery anger of Abú Sufiyán and his hosts, the furious fanaticism of the pious Ansárs who regarded the Theqífeh verdict an act of treachery to the memory of their deceased Prophet. 'Alí had regarded his claims to the Caliphate incontrovertible,^x his name when proposed for the Caliphate at Theqífeh^y was hastily hushed^z up behind his back and while he was busy in the obsequies of the Prophet of the Muslims. 'Alí could well regard it a trick played upon himself but fate had once again placed the key in his hands. He was at liberty and had the power of turning the key in the flood-gates and let loose the pent up storms that would wash away before its torrential flow the trick that

(r) Alí's (s) Tabri, Seyûti, Ibn Athir.

t Ch. 37 PP. 4-6 u Ch. 43 v Ch. 34-36 w Ch 37 PP. 4-5.

x Ch. 34. P. 5 y Ch. 36. PP. 3,6 z Ch. 36. P. 6

had been played upon him, the indignity that confronted the pride of Abú Sufiyán, the humiliation^a the Khezrij had been saddled with and the treachery^b with the pious instincts of those who were loyal to the memory of their Prophet. Each group fighting for a cause, 'Alí saw them all fighting to instal him on the throne of their great Prophet.

With the key held between his thumb and forefinger 'Alí paused and reflected, should he or should he not give it the great turning? At his word, nay, the gesture of his little finger, a nod of his head the City shall fly to arms, Abú Sufiyán's cavalry and infantry shall inundate the streets and alleys of Medineh to wipe out with human blood the Theqífeh verdict. But 'Alí reflects. Shall he or shall he not utter the word, make the gesture, or, give his great head the nod which the City is waiting for with bated breath.

4. The great body of the Ansárs furious, the humiliated Khezrij vindictive, the Muhajirs resentful, the great Meccan chiefs candalized and infuriated the Hashimites disappointed and desperate, the seething storm portends an outburst furious and ferocious, the ushering in of a civil war which Arabs only knew how to prolong and to fight to its bitter and all-destructive end. Truly and verily, in the words of Abú Sufiyán, it is a 'storm' and a 'conflagration' ominous and terrific. The City is a veritable volcano ready to burst and to burn. The provincial horizon is frightfully gloomy and growling.^c Political adventurers in the garb of false^d prophets

a Ch. 36. P. 7, Ch. 42. P. 1. b. Ch. 36. P. 3.

c Cb. 34-36. d. Ch. 34. P. 2.

are stalking about to win the faith and territories of Islam. The wide-mouthed Byzantine and the Persian, accross the frontiers, is gloating over the prospect of swallowing up the infant State that is preparing to shatter itself to pieces on the rock of selfish ambition.

'Ali's powerful mind is visualising all this, and with the keen eye of a cultured statesman is watching its hideous consequences. Out of wrong haste a situation, an extremely delicate situation has arisen which requires an equally delicate and careful handling. An error of judgement, a trifle, a very trifle erroneous, a weakness, the very slightest, a small, a very small bit of a spirit of selfish grandiose, and this magnificent structure, this sacred handiwork of its master-builder, built on the great Islamic principles will come down with a crash. Is this great edifice, this dear monument of the industrious and illustrious genius of Mohammad, the Prophet, saved or exposed to the destructive onslaughts of political catapults. His far-seeing eye sees the real danger; what is threatened is not merely the territory on which the State extends but the fraternal principles, the new brotherhood, the great new idea of intellectual camaraderie, compendiously called Islam, radiating peace and good-will, established and organised for proclaiming to the World the Oneness of God and Brotherhood of Man.

Calm and cool, firm and great, high on the noble pedestal of Islamic patriotism and self-forgetting love for and self-sacrificing loyalty towards the Mission of the Prophet who is no more in the land of the living, with foaming waves of chaotic civil war surging and dashing under his feet, stands the masterful figure of 'Ali, surveying and analyzing the cirsis in all its details and possible

potentialities. He is a Hâshimite, the first cousin of the Prophet for whom and whose Mission he has forsaken his hereditary rank of a Meccan Chief; he it is who, at the risk of his life, had occupied the deadly bed that the Prophet may go in "Flight" and escape a premature ending at the hands of a united and hostile Mecca and then followed the Prophet to Medineh, in voluntary exile; he it is who has fought Mohammed's battles as none else has fought them and won for him many a field that had well-nigh been lost; has helped him build the State as none other can claim to have done; his is a lineage, the most illustrious and popularity, unequalled; him it is that the Ansárs wanted to be their Caliph when he was not at Theqifeh to influence them; he it is to whose door the Caliphate is being brought by a unanimous City without his going about soliciting and canvassing for it; the City has voluntarily and willingly brought it to him because he merits it and deserves it. Rule is his birth-right, his sword-hand has confirmed it and the City in its unanimity has recognised this double right of his. But should he accept the offer?

His quick-thinking, cultured mind is thinking deep and rapid, for on this thinking depends the future of Islam, the integrity of the State and the solidarity of Muslims. Shall he plunge the nation in fratricidal warfare and expose it to internal and external foes, both religious and political?

5. 'Alî's noble mind is resolved. His reflective face shines with the godly light of a great determination. He has decided to preserve Mohammed's work and the Prophet's Mission, of which the State is but an exponent and an outward symbol. A civil war

may be sure to bring him the crown but he will not allow it. The redoubtable Abú Sufiyán, a no mere braggart, has conjoined with his proffered fealty the offer of filling the City with his cavalry and infantry if 'Alí consents to wear the crown and save the Meccan's emblazoned pride the indignity of having to bow to Abú Biker, "of the humblest of the Qureish clans". The offer is tempting and great but greater still is 'Alí's reply. Truly, it requires a great mind and a brave tongue to think and utter the thought in the sublime strain: "You (Abú Sufiyán) have been a mischief-maker during times pre-Islamic and have the same mind still."^e We do not need *your* advice".^f The proud Arab is struck dumb at the reply which came upon his hopes and expectations like a sledge-hammer, but the occasion urgently demanded a clear, categorical, unambiguous and impressive declaration of 'Alí's policy. Through Abú Sufiyán, 'Alí has issued the manifesto of his policy to all those who are of the former's way of thinking.

6. In one emphatic utterance 'Alí has taken the wind out of the sails of mischief-makers; in one breath he has rendered disorder and disturbance impossible, he has hushed down the clamorous forces of chaos and internecine disruption. The State is saved the horrors and agonies of a ferocious civil war at a time which is the most critical and fraught with dreadful dangers both imminent and potential. He has preserved the integrity of the State by his lofty act which has gone a long way towards making it impregnable against Arab schemers and foreign foes. He has preserved the State from disintegration; he has preserved

Effect.

(e) Rauza tus Seifá.

(f) Tārīkh Kāmil, by Ibn Athīr.

Mohammed's work for long and for ever to be the radiating centre of Islamic culture and civilisation, to be the luminous and humanising source of all that Islam has done for the enlightenment and advancement of the human race. It has cost him the crown which was his for the taking but his is the noble large-mindedness well accustomed to achieve great results at great personal sacrifices. During the night of the "Flight", lying on the Prophet's death-enveloped bed, when he had, at the risk of his life, enabled Mohammed to fly from his blood-thirsty foes, he had proudly sung of the great risk he had run and the great result he had achieved. Pride of action and modesty of mind are so beautifully mingled as to recommend a re-reading of the verses given in original and translated in Ch. 13. P.P. 2—3.

Good poetry that and not a mere poet's fancy. Purely and entirely for God he had risked his life to save the Prophet's life and Mission and thrown away his hereditary coronet of a Meccan chief to follow the Prophet in poor exile to Medineh. Once again he has pushed back the crown, that is brought to his door, to save the Prophet's handiwork from disruption and disintegration. He might have worn the crown but he preferred to preserve the Prophet's Mission from harm that threatened it after the Prophet's departure from the land of the living. Endangered but preserved Islam is grateful for this signal service to the Prophet's "brother, vizier and vicegerant". Truly was 'Ali to Mohammed as "Aaron was to Moses".^g Truly was 'Ali Mohammed's "brother in this World and the Hereafter".^h

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE EXIGENCIES OF ADMINISTRATION

Abû Biker's difficulties—preferments and subsidies—Hereditary pension offered to 'Abbâs—Abû Biker speaks and 'Umer—'Abbâs replies.

1. A new crown, to be a comfortable wear, requires, more often than not, a careful padding and elaborate lining. Friends have to be rewarded, partly Problems to materialise their expectations and partly to foster a spirit of useful emulation among the lukewarm foes have to be weaned from their ideas, voice of adverse criticism has to be silenced, and public opinion is to be educated in the new way or diverted into wholesome channels. 'Alî, by withholding his lead, had rendered the organising of an armed resistance highly impracticable,ⁱ if not impossible, but tho City was sulky and seditious. There was, in the air, the idea of reviewing the Theqifeh verdict. The Qureish magnates, the City lions and Ansâr chiefs were to be reconciled and friends brought closer to steadfastness. Abû Biker diligently set about the task without losing time.

2. 'Umer bin Khettâbj became the prime-minister, president of the privy-council and the Chief Justice,^k and Cultivating public opinion was finally nominated by the Caliph^l to be his successor. Abû 'Obeideh^m bin Jerrâh was raised to be the chancellor of the exchequerⁿ, then given the chief command of the Syrian campaign^o and, finally, the military governorship of Syria.^p The spy Mughireh

(i) Ch. 38 PP. 1-6 (j) Ch. 34 P. 1. Ch. 36 PP. 1,4,6

(k) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali (l) Ch. 50. P. 1

(m) Ch. 34. P. 1, Ch. 36; P. 1,4,5, Ch. 58. P. 2. (n) Seyûti .

(o) Ch. 44. P. 11. (p) Ibid

bin Shobehā became a privy councillor.^r 'Uthmān bin 'Effān^s were raised to the pontifical secretariate and so was Thābit^t bin Qeis, the Ansār spokesman at Theqifeh. The latter personage was also entrusted with the important task of moulding public opinion by subsidising the Ansār females.^u Sa'eed bin el 'Ās was displaced from his charge of the Syrain expedition for withholding his fealty and putting himself in communication with 'Alī. 'Uthmān and the chiefs of the Benī Zohreh. He mended his mind and became, first, a recruiting officer and was then given a command during the expedition.^v Crest-fallen at having his offer of allegiance and armed assistance against Abū Biker rejected by 'Alī, Abū Sufiyān reached home and was greeted with the winsome news of his sons having been promised lucrative jobs by the new Caliph.^w One of his sons, Yezīd, commanded the expedition against Damascus^x, the other one, Mu'āwiyveh, captained the reserve forces during the Syrian expedition.^y Amongst others of Abū Sufiyān's kinsmen, Khālid bin Welīd, cousin of 'Abdur Rehman^z bin 'Auf, became the generalissimo of the Caliph's army^a, 'Ikremeh bin Abū Jihl commanded expeditions against 'Ummān and the Byzantine frontiers.^b Brā' bin 'Āzīb^c and Huzeifeh bin Elīmān^d (who were among the magnates arranging for a review of the Theqifeh verdict) are seen conquering Qizwīn, Zinjān and Nehāwend during 'Umer's Caliphate. The Ansār ally Useid bin Huzeir,^e too, became a military magnate.^f

(q) Ch. 36. P. 1, (r) P. 4 below.

(s) Ch. 34. P. 1 Ch. 50 P. 1 (t) Ch. 36. P. 3.

(u) P. 3 below (v) Ch. 49 p. 11 (w) Tabrī and Seyūfī

(x) Ch. 49 P. 11 (y) Ch. 49 P. 12 (z) Ch. 34 P. 1

(a) Ch. 44 P. 2 (b) Ch. 45. P. 2 Ch. 46 PP. 3-4

(c) Ch. 37 P. 3 (d) Ch. 37 P. 5

(e) Ch. 34 PP. 1-2 Ch. 36 P. 3 (f) *Tārīkh-ul-Khemīs*

3. While important individuals were thus being brought closer, won or appeased, public opinion was being influenced through a very effective channel. Zeid bin Thábit,^g an Ansár chief, was deputed to distribute money amongst the females of Muhájirs and Ansárs. He sent some money to a lady of the Bení 'Adí bin el Nejjár who sent it back with the rebuke, "do you want to purchase my faith with this bribe^h".

4. For a similar purpose the Háshimite 'Abbas—the Prophet's uncle—was approached but with scant success. The spying Mughíreh bin Sho' beh suggested offer to 'Abbás that the assent of 'Abbás to the existing order of things would be a useful weapon against any pro-Háshimite agitation. He suggested to offer him a hereditary pension in perpetuityⁱ. Accordingly, the Caliph, accompanied by 'Umer and Abú 'Obeideh, went to 'Abbás the night following the day of Abú Sufiyán's visit to 'Alí. After a suitable preface Abú Biker said to the old Háshimite, "We are informed of the objections that objectors raise against the 'unanimous' verdict of Muslims, and they so object under cover of you. You should fall in with the *will* of the nation or at least discourage the designs of the objectors. We desire to assign, out of the Caliphate, a share to you and your heirs because you are the Prophet's uncle. People are cognizant of your and your kinsmen's dignity but they have kept the Caliphate from your family. O ye Bení 'Abdul Muttallib, ye should, therefore, recognise your true position; the Prophet was as much from us as from you."

(g) Ch. 36 P. 3 (h) Ibn Abí Hedíd, in his Commentary on Nehj-ul-Belágheh. (i) Ibid.

'Umer bin Khettáb added: "Yes, by Allah, it is but good and proper, for we have approached you, not that we have any need of you but because we do not like that a unanimous verdict of Muslims should be attacked under cover of you. This will involve in trouble both you and the objectors. You will, therefore, do well to consider it both for your sake and that of the objectors^j"

5. Instead of the first person singular, the use of the plural pronoun 'We' in Abú Biker's address is, probably, to impress 'Abbás with the speaker's royal status, and the words 'are informed' convey a triple idea, firstly, of the speaker's newly acquired right to be 'informed', secondly, of there being a news agency working for the speaker and, thirdly, of the addressee being a person watched and shadowed by the speaker's news agency for harbouring seditious persons. The haziness of the language is intended to indicate that the speaker knows more than he chooses to disclose; by thus frightening his guilty conscience the addressee is tempted to wriggle out of the vague accusation by, at once, offering his allegiance or, at least, by denying that he has anything to do with the seditious "objectors". Should 'Abbás, however, choose to be peppery and, calling himself a constitutional opponent, resent being dubbed a seditious conspirator, the accusation is worded widely enough to secure the speaker an easy backing out. There is no definite charge; the speaker speaks on what is, after all, a mere "information"; it is only the "objectors" who use him as a cover and, probably, without the Hashimite's authorisation; and if he does not desire to offer his allegiance, he is merely

(j) Kitáb ul Imámet vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibeh.

requested to "at least discourage the designs of the objectors"; his allegiance is not specifically requested for but he is merely required to keep himself neutral in consideration for a hereditary pension, but should he resent to accept—in the words of the Bení Nejjár lady^k—the bribe, it is no bribe, for it is merely a tribute to the venerable uncle of the Prophet. 'Abbás is told that the people do not want his family for the Caliphate and that there is, as a matter of fact, nothing peculiar about the family. The Prophet was a Qureish and so was the speaker^l. The Hášimites on grounds of mere consanguinity with the Prophet could set forth no claims for the Caliphate that were higher or stronger than those of the speaker. 'Umer caps this carefully worded address with his forceful addendum that 'Abbás is not to get elated at being approached by the Caliph and his prime-minister and that if he does not offer his allegiance or adopt a neutral attitude and consult his safety by accepting the proffered pension he will find himself and his party in great trouble.

6. 'Abbás, the veteran old Hášimite, listened to the speaker and his prime-minister, grasped their intention and appreciated the meaning of their respective speeches, and with the undaunted frankness of a true Hášimite noble replied, "If the Prophet left the Caliphate to the *will* of the people, the election should be on the ground of the candidate's merits and not on those of personal ambition. If you claim it on grounds of consanguinity^m with the Prophet

(k) P. 3 *Supra* (l) Compare his argument at Theqífah, Ch. 36, P. 4, claiming consanguinity with the Prophet.

(m) Ch. 36 P. 4.

then you have usurped our rights. If you claim it as a "believer", then we are the most preferable. If you claim it through the "believers", you stand unsubstantiated for *we* do not accept you. As regards your proffered gift, if it belongs to you, we do not need it; if it belongs to the public you have no right to grant it to us; if it is our right, then we can not give up the rest of our claim and be content with a portion of it in the form of a pension. Concerning your claim that the Prophet came from youⁿ as much as he was our blood, then know that the Prophet was a (genealogical) tree of which we are the branches and you the neighbouring vegetation".^o "Your reference to the dangers ahead of us and our friends, you are already prepared for that emergency and God is our succour".^p

With what comprehensive detail 'Abbás makes his reply, what critical and analytical powers he possesses, with what keen logic he deals with each one of the points raised by the deputationists, with what calm deliberation he demolishes the case of his adversaries and how courteously he falsifies their position, and the reader's admiration will increase manifold if he remembers that the reply has come spontaneously, without any premeditation, at once, and on the spot. He reminds the Caliph that he is more than seven degrees removed from the Prophet and, therefore, his claim^q at Theqífeh, of consanguinity with the Prophet can not stand against the Háshimites. He reminds him that, as Muslims, the

(n) P. 4. Supra (o) Kitáb ul Immámet vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibeh.

(p) Ibn Abil Hedid, in his commentary on Nehj ul Belagheh

(q) Ch. 35 P. 4.

Háshimites are better entitled to the Caliphate, for they have put in for the Faith services unparalleled and sacrifices unequalled by those of any other individual. Their sincerity of purpose and purity of faith is far above that of any one else. Knowledge,^r popularity,^s prestige, both Islamic and pre-Islamic, ungrudging and unflinching assistance and attachment to the Prophet and his Mission entitle the Háshimites to a most decisive and effective voice in determining the future governance of the Islamic State which is pre-eminently the handiwork of the Prophet and his family and, therefore, any election held without their knowledge and without giving them an opportunity of having their say can not arrogate to itself the name of election or have any binding force. The honest old particarch shows his true mettle in disdaining to accept the proffered gift of a hereditary pension as the price of his acquiescence or neutrality in the affair. His reply shows how strongly he believed in clean politics when he says he can not barter away his family's rights for personal gain; if the pension is to come out of somebody's private pocket he does not want to be the recipient of the charity; if the pension is to be paid out of the State-treasury the charitable donor is reminded that he has no right to go about at night,^t allocating State funds in the secret fashion. 'Abbás is his own grand Hashimite self when, instead of getting frightened or nervous at the hidden threat conveyed in the deputationists' words of impending trouble for the Háshimites and their friends, he boldly declares that in spite of the speaker's preparations, he is content with his lot because "God is our succour". Similar to his

(r) Ch. 36. P. 4, Ch. 40. P. 4, Ch. 46 P. 1 (s) Ch. 36 P 5.

(t) P. 4 Supra.

brother Abú Talib's words in defence of Mohammed;^u
how truly they sound like his father 'Abdul Muttelib's
words to Abreheh in defence of the Kabe'h"^v

CHAPTER XL.

THE CALIPH AND ALI.

'Ali states his case—'Umer's threat—Abù 'Obeideh speaks and is replied—Bashir bin Sa'd speaks and is converted—Abù Biker pleads—realizes his diplomatic error—seeks correcting it—confiscates Fedak.

1. 'Ali's snubbing administered to Abù Sufiyan paralysed the hands of the violent among the City magnates. When the Caliph thought he had sufficiently cultivated public opinion and had, by negotiations, made it difficult for the proposal of reconsidering^w the Theqifeh verdict to materialise, he decided to take the bold step of inviting 'Ali to tender his allegiance. 'Ali came and said:

2. "I merit the Caliphate more than any one of you does. It is you who ought to offer your fealty to me rather than ask me for it. You succeeded, against the Ansárs on the strength of consanguinity with the Prophet. The Ansárs yielded to you because you said that Mohammed was of you.^x I put forth the same argument against you. In life, in death, I am nearest the Prophet. In the name of your Faith, be just to me or you shall have perpetrated a grave injustice".

3. 'Umer bin Khettáb intervened to say, "we shall not let you go unless you tender your allegiance", to which 'Ali rejoined, "Milk the cow as thoroughly as you can, for the udder is now in your possession; complete and confirm the factum (of

(w) Ch. 37 P. 5 see also Ch. 39 P. 2 *ref* Brà bin 'A'zib and Huzeifeh (x) Ch. 36 P. 4.

the Caliphate) for your chief that tomorrow he may hand it back to you. But know it, O 'Umer, I am not going to do *your* bidding, I shall not offer my allegiance. I do not fear you, and to my rights I shall stick to the last".

4. The mealy-mouthed Abú 'Obeideh was more diplomatic in trying to soften 'Ali by saying, "My cousin, Abú 'Obeideh you are youthful, these people are the elders bin Jerráh. of your tribe, you are not yet as experienced as these people are. A few days hence you will grow older and quite fit for the job. Your excellence and sincerity of faith, your knowledge and wisdom, the fact of your being the first Muslim, your high and noble lineage coupled with the dignity of being the Prophet's son-in-law, all befit you so well for the high office".

Replying to Abú 'Obeideh, 'Ali addressed the audience:3

5. "We are the Prophet's family and we merit the Caliphate more than any one else. We possess expert knowledge of the Book, Islamic jurisprudence and the rationale of the Prophet's precepts. We know the requirements of the Islamic State and of its citizens, we know what is bad for the people and how to dispel it, we are the distributors of *equality*, and, by Allah, this is the truth. O Abú 'Obeideh, speak not unrighteously, nor unrightfully transfer the prerogative of the Prophet's house to another's. The Qurán was revealed in our house. We are the custodians of the *theory* of religion and the Prophet's rulings. We know the Law of Islam and what is good for the nation more and better

than any one else does. Be not selfish and injure not *your* good”.

Bashir bin Sad,^z the Ansár chief of the Aus branch, put in:

6. “Had the Ansárs heard you, O ‘Alí, before tendering fealty to Abú Biker, non would have gone against you; had you disclosed your mind before the Ansárs had offered their allegiance to Abú Biker not more than two^a persons would have opposed you. But as you remained within doors people *were led to believe* that you did not want the Caliphate. Now that they have allied themselves to Abú Biker, the people, for fear of dissensions, will not like you to oppose the *fait accompli*”.^b ‘Alí replied:

Basair bin
Sa'd speaks
the Ansár
mind.

7. “Would you like me, O Bashir, to go about scrambling for rule and forsake the Prophet’s remains and obsequies”.

Alí's reply.

Abú Biker intervened to stop the discussion by saying:-

8. “I had conjectured that you, O ‘Alí, will not object in this affair of mine; I would not have accepted the Caliphate had I known your mind. Now that the people have agreed upon me, your assent would be a confirmation of my conjecture. Your assent would rectify our error. If you want time to consider and deliberate over the matter, there is no harm.

Abú Biker
pleads.

(z) Ch. 36 P.P. 3,6 [a] Refers probably to ‘Umer and Abu ‘Obeideh, Abu Biker’s companions at Theqifeh, vide Ch. 37 note (q) to P. 2.

[b] Compare his words : Ch. 36. PP. 3,5

(after that) should you tender your allegiance, well and good, but should you decide otherwise there would be no compulsion on you". 'Alí withdrew from the assembly without tendering his allegiance to Abu Biker.^c

9. On the very day of the Prophet's demise, when Abú Sufián and 'Abbás had, as representatives of the leading Muhájir tribes, hastened to tender allegiance to 'Alí, he had, by the words and tone of his reply, given out that he held his claim to the Caliphate to be incontrovertible.^d His claim was admitted by the Ansárs at Theqífeh, the City, too, was in his favour. The court knew this and had, therefore, sought to split up the Háshimites by winning the allegiance or at least the neutrality of 'Abbás by the nocturnal offer of a hereditary pension,^e but 'Abbás had insisted on his family's^f rights. 'Alí had rejected Abú Sufián's idea of armed resistance^g because of its unworthy motive—saving the Ummeyyáde's emblazoned dignity from having to bow to a "plebeian upstart"^h—and violent intention.ⁱ Forgetting that 'Alí had never discountenanced the idea of a reconsideration of the question of the Caliphate by a constituent assembly in a peaceful and constitutional manner,^j and because 'Alí's allegiance would allay all agitation, the Court in a hasty nervousness summoned him to tender his fealty in a public gathering. Another tactical mistake the Court was guilty of consisted in being drawn into a discussion on the merits of the case. Not his courtiers but the Caliph realized that he was

[c] Kitab ul Imāmet vas Siyāset, by Ibn Quteibeh, Rauzat us Sefa, Ruza tul Ahbāb, A'them Kufi [d] Ch. 35 PP. 4-5

[e] Ch. 39. P. 4. [f] Ch. 34 P. 6 [g] Ch. 38 P. 5

[h] Ch. 38. P. 2 [i] Ibid [j] Ch. 37. P. 5

giving 'Alí an assembled gathering wherein to put forth and reason out his case and demolish that of his adversary; but that was too late, for 'Alí had already detailed forth his claim and refuted all the best arguments of each one of the courtiers. The trend of 'Alí's talk foreshadowed its culmination—refusal of allegiance, repudiation of the Theqífeh verdict. The Caliph intervened opportunely and succeeded in keeping the word of definite refusal unsaid. And with that word unsaid the Caliph gave to the debate the appearance of a mere preliminary discussion in which 'Alí was granted time to consider and mature his ideas on the point. The Caliph's was a wise course. The world that knew of 'Alí's rebuke to Abú Sufiyan could be told that 'Alí had gone to the Court and had not *refused* his allegiance to the Caliph. The Caliph had, by his intervention, saved a lot but had by his slow comprehension lost a deal. He had allowed the debate to proceed and let the audience hear it; the arguments were sure to filter down to the City. Those present had seen 'Alí depart without offering his allegiance to the Caliph. This fact and the relative strength of the arguments would lead the City to draw its own conclusion.

10. 'Alí was allowed to depart and consider the question at his leisure but the debate rendered it highly expedient to demonstrate the strength of the Court to the City as also to indicate to 'Alí the direction his deliberations should take in the search for the line of least resistance. It had already been intimated to 'Abbás that recalcitrance would involve in trouble both the Hášimites and their protagonists.^k

A warning.

Now, just to foreshadow those troubles, the Fedek¹ estate of "Our Lady of Light", the Prophet's pious daughter, 'Ali's noble consort, Fátiméh, was confiscated and escheated to the Crown.

(1) CH.19,P.27

CHAPTER XLI

‘ALI’S TROUBLES

‘Ali’s attitude—services and sacrifices—‘Ali felt the loss of Fedak—its real sting—Islam’s Pilgrim Father retired from politics to editel Qurán and propound and discover the *rationale* of Religion—‘Ali and Intellectualism—‘Ali again in the Court—its *bad diplomacy*—‘Ali again *refuses allegiance*.

1. ‘Ali had eschewed violence by refusing to champion Abú Sufiyan’s warlike designs against the Caliph^m,
had avoided raising any agitation in his own
 Ali’s attitude favour, had scrupulously kept himself aloof
 from the constitutional agitators who were arranging for a peaceful reconsideration of the question of the Caliphateⁿ lest he should be taken to be fostering it from personal motives. But he could not, in all conscience and consistently with his own ideas of rightness and fitness of things^o, ally or identify himself with the Theqifeh *coup* which had been accomplished against the wishes of preponderatingly influential majority^p of that gathering, behind the back and without the knowledge and consent of the Islamic State and against the Prophet’s Khumm^q declaration. With reasons and in frankness he had, in open assembly, put forth his case^r, had appealed to the good sense of the audience and called upon the political sanity and sagacity of the nation to deliver its judgment. Instead of waiting for the judgment of his own courtiers or encouraging a plebeicite, the Caliph hustled him out of the assembly on finding his Aus ally Bashir sliding on to Ali’s logic^s.

(m) Ch. 38. PP. 2,6 (n) Ch. 36. P. 5. (o) Ch. 40. P. 5
 (p) Ch. 36. PP. 7-8 (q) Ch. 26, P. 4. (r) Ch. 40 PP. 1-8
 (s) Ch. 40. P. 6.

Nay more, economic pressure of the worst sort was brought to bear upon him in the shape of the Fedak escheat.^t

For the sake of Islam, 'Alí had voluntarily thrown away his forefathers' ecclesiastical coronet of the city of the Ka'beh and waived his rank as a Maccan noble, both of which honours were his after Abú Tálíb. 'Alí had laid himself on Mohammed's condemned bed to cover the latter's escape during the historic night of the Flight^u. To secure the Prophet's safety and that of his Mission, 'Alí had not scrupled to divert to himself the brutal death that united Mecca had planned for the Prophet. Abandoning his ancestral estate, 'Alí had followed the outlawed Apostle into voluntary poverty and exile. The infuriated Meccans had confiscated his estate but 'Alí did not care a bit for it. Loss of worldly goods was no new thing for him, fear of economic loss had never shaken him from the path of his conscience, but the loss to the family of the Fedak estate rent his noble heart. His Meccan honours, dignities and estates had been confiscated by heathens but after life-long and peerless services to the cause of Islam the Fedak estate was confiscated by the Islamic State.

2. Just to add a fresh item to the already long list of his sacrifices, 'Alí would have welcomed even this, only if the loss were personal. It was "Our Lady of Light", his noble consort, Fátiméh who claimed the estate as her father's donee^v and heiress. On grounds which have ever since been questioned, doubted and

(t) Ch. 40 P. 10 (u) Ch. 12-13 (v) Ch. 19. P. 27.

discussed^w her claim to the estate was over-ruled by the Caliph. The pious and learned lady dissented from both the validity and reasoning of the executive ruling and strongly resented it, so much so that, thenceforward, she hated the very presence of the Caliph who, contrary to all principles of civilized jurisprudence, had constituted himself judge in a civil claim against himself. She—the daughter of Khedijeh, the merchant-princess of fabulous wealth^x, had lived in voluntary poverty and received the dowry of a pauper's daughter without grumbling and in all contentment^y—felt the loss of this strip of land not because of its value but because of its great associations^z and the sweet memories connected with the father who was the Prophet; she felt it because the loving father whose gift and heirloom had been withdrawn from her, who had mothered her since her august mother's death was no longer in the land of the living to compensate her for the loss and to solace her with his unbounded love and affection.

"Our Lady of Light" felt it. There appeared a sadder shade on her bereaved face, her big beautiful eyes, tearful in memory of her father, showed a sorrowful resignation. 'Ali's cultured mind felt that the decision was a reflex of his attitude towards the question of

(w) The Caliph grounded his verdict on a singular dictum attributed to the Prophet, "We of the Prophet class do neither inherit nor leave behind inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is public property." Besides being unknown to the Prophet's numerous other Companions the dictum is contrary, both to the Qur'an and the Old Testament which mention Prophets inheriting or leaving inheritance, e.g. Solomon and David.

(x) Ch. 6, P. 1 (y) Ch. 16, P. 5. (z) Ch. 19, P. 27.

the Caliphate and he knew also that her noble mind's healthy delicacy would maintain, on the point, a loving reticence, with the full understanding that her loss was due to her husband's position in the new polity. It was exactly here that the sting of the confiscation lay. Man may sacrifice his property, spill his life-blood, nay, lay down his very life at the altar of his ideals but to let his ideals be the channel to conduct affliction to his near and dear ones is nauseating and repellant to any heart beating within the breast of any being that is human. The withdrawal of the Fedak estate seared and singed 'Ali's great heart.

3. In the midst of the sordid politics 'Ali remembered the Prophet's grand injunction quoted by Avicenna, "what a fine injunction of the one who is the best of men, the greatest and the last of Prophets to one who is the pivot of all philosophy, the firmament of all Rationalism and the store of all wisdom, to wit, 'Ali Bin Abú Talib who is among the Companions as the Rational is in the Material: 'when folks attempt reaching the Lord through diverse and haphazard acts of goodness, you, O 'Ali, *go ahead of them by the path of Rationalism*. When people are steeped in self-mortification through indulging in rituals of worship and in conventional charities, you, O 'Ali, exert yourself in discovering the *Rationale of Religion*'. The injunction is too good, surely, to be imparted to any one who, in excellence and wisdom is, in essence, not akin to the Apostolate". Accordingly, the Pilgrim Father of Islam shook the unclean dust of sordid politics off his shoes and migrated into the realm of Intellectualism. Like unto his votunlary exile from heathen Meccah into the City of the Prophet to work, labour and fight for the es-

tablishment of Islam—the Religion of peace, and self-realisation—in the self-forgotten world of blind materialism, ‘Ali once again exiled himself from the materialism of ambitious politics into the domain of Reason and Intellectualism, there to proclaim and establish the predominance of Mohammed’s everlasting Mission. Mohammed and ‘Ali, the two eternal cousins of perpetual and ever-increasing value to human progress were collaborators in Medíneh but in the second exile ‘Ali was all alone, lonely and bereft of the great guidance of Mohammed’s Godly genius. Alone and lonely, ‘Ali betook himself, in pursuance of the Prophet’s Command, to the seclusion of his home and vowed “never to come out of it, nor to don on formal dress till he had edited the Quran for the world”.

4. It was in the midst and out of this holy seclusion that wrangling politics and noisy diplomacy of the sor-
The Court
and Ali. did world disturbed the literary hermit in his sacred studies. His rejection of Abú Sufiyán’s offer^a had spilt buckets of cold water on the fiery anger of the City magnates.^b Though apprised of the winsome offer made to his sons, Abú Sufiyán was not at all reconciled to the Caliphate. Hearing that ‘Ali had publicly refused to tender his allegiance to Abú Biker, people came to his house^c within the four-walls of which he had shut himself against all outside developments. The Caliph deputed his prime-minister ‘Umer, to see to the matter. With a batch of men and lighting materials ‘Umer came and called upon the inmates to leave the house and do homage to the Caliph, or, he would set it

(a) Ch.38.PP.2,5. Ch.42.P.2 (b) Ch.37.PP.4-6

(c) Ch.39.P.4

aflame. On being reminded that the house he intended perpetrating incendiarism upon belonged to his Prophet's daughter, he said that he was indifferent to anything extraneous to his immediate object. To avoid the sanctity of Fátiméh's residence being violated by incendiarism the visitors left the house and as they did so hot words and some blows were exchanged between the parties. Some found it convenient to comply with 'Umer's demand for hamage, others resisted. "Ali, held himself apart in proud and indignant reserve until the death of Fatimeh which happened in the course of several months".^d 'Umer returned with his report and urged upon his chief to have 'Ali's recalcitrance ended.

Abú Biker, accordingly, sent his slave who came and said to 'Ali, "The Prophet's Caliph wants you".

"I do not recognise the Caliph. Your master, in assuming and you in proclaiming the title have so soon begun foisting things on the Prophet," replied 'Ali.

He returned and came back to say, "The Commander of the Faithful wants you".^e

"Your master has no right to assume that title," replied 'Ali.

5. At last, 'Ali is again in the Court to meet the demand for allegiance. He had already detailed that
 The Court's mistake. Caliphate in Islam was an onerous duty for the performance of which the incumbent required peculiar and very superior qualities of head and heart and that apart from the qualities all of which were found in him and him alone, he was better fitted for and

(d) The Successors of Mahomet, by W. Irving

(e) Amír ul Momínin

better entitled to that office even on the grounds on which the Theqifeh verdict was based.^f By his actions he had shown that though possessed of the means, he would eschew all violence and disturbance. He considered that the present incumbent was not fit to discharge the onerous and very peculiar duties pertaining to the sacred and secular succession to the Prophet and, therefore, as "Aaron to the new Moses" he could not give his assent to leaving the spirit of Islam in a keeping that he considered unworthy of the great charge. Look at the Teacher of Nazareth, giving unto Cæsar what was Cæsar's; reincarnated in 'Alī who decides to leave the world to the world but to have it known by the world that he did protest against the despiritualisation of politics. Embalmed in history lies 'Alī's holy protest against the course of ugly incidents and questionable acts done in the name of Religion but of which Islam, in the presence of 'Alī's protest, can not be held responsible. 'Alī proclaimed by the the protest that Cæsors may govern the world but *man*, in Islam, was meant by the Master to be governed by a different scheme and manner.

The Court from its previous interview with 'Alī had learnt not to be argumentative and, therefore, made a formal, succinct demand for allegiance. Equally succinctly asked 'Alī, "what happens if I do not tender it". "By Allah, you shall be killed". "Then you shall have killed Allah's creature and His Prophet's cousin", rejoined 'Alī. The suddenness and resignation of the reply glued the Caliph's lips. 'Umer bin Khettāb urged his Chief to pronounce the fatal word. Death had been given out as

(f) Ch. 40. PP. 24-7

the penalty and now death was the only alternative but the Court dared not execute its threat. The Court once again found itself stultified and it wriggled out of the awkward hole by letting the rescusant 'Alī depart unharmed and uninjured—the Caliph said, "Till Fátimēh lives I can not compel him ('Alī) to anything".

Without offering his allegiance 'Alī again left the Court to resume his literary labours.

N.B. The Chapter and its quotations are taken from *Kitāb ul-Imāmet vas Siyāset*, by Ibn Quteibeh, Tabri, Gibbon's *History of the Rise and Fall of the Raman Empire*, Davenport's *Apology for Mohammad*.

CHAPTER XLII

MORE DIFFICULTIES

Sa'd refuses allegiance—threatens violence—his fate—Berideh, of the Bení Aslem raises flag for 'Alí—refuses agreement with 'Umer—the Caliph approaches Fátiméh—she refuses to see his face.

1. The Khezrij who were by far the most powerful and predominant Ansár tribe looked upon the Theqifeh *coup* as a great "humiliation" and insult to Khezrij. their tribal dignity. Their chief, Sa'd bin 'Obádeh had been trampled underfoot^h and the dire insult was unforgivable. The chief was offended and with him was furious the whole tribe. The chief had ceased to be on speaking or visiting terms with the offenders.ⁱ He was sent for to tender his allegiance to the Caliph. Not deigning to come and reply personally Sa'd sent a fiery, furious message through his son Qeis, "By Allah, till I use up all the arrows in my quiver and till all the arrows and the point of my spear are red with your life-blood, till my hands have strength to wield my sword and till I have led my brethren and my kinsmen in battle against you, I shall never tender my allegiance, even if you lead against me the whole human race and powers supernatural. I shall withhold my allegiance till I die and appear before the Lord to account for my actions". The prime-minister, 'Umer bin Khettáb, advised violence against the chief. The chief's messenger and son, Qeis, advising the court to the contrary, said, "He (the chief) is very insistent and on his oath. He will never do homage till he gets killed, but he can not be killed till all his sons get killed and also his relatives,

kinsmen and clansmen, and you can not kill these unless you kill the whole Khezrij tribe, the Khezrij can not be finished until the Aus also are exterminated. Why should you create such confusion to establish a matter which is already well-nigh established in your favour. It is expedient to leave him alone, and it is not harmful to you. You can afford to treat him as a single individual, and an individual, more or less, in your circle does not count. Keep away, therefore, from him." The Caliph and his Premier consulted. The Aus chief, Bashir bin Sa'dj also supported Qeis.^k

Sa'd bin 'Obádeh was, consequently, left alone but he never joined Abú Biker in daily prayers and in cathedral service, on Fridays. He ceased to be on speaking terms with the Caliph till the latter's death. During the second Caliphate Sa'd went over to Syria. He was required, on pain of death, to offer allegiance to the new Caliph, 'Umer.^l He refused and was killed with an arrow or by the hand of a *jinn*.^m

2. Hearing of the happenings in the City, Berídeh bin el Hoseib raised, among the Bení Aslem,ⁿ a standard which the tribesmen brought and erected in front of 'Alí's door. 'Umer bin Khettáb approached him to say that the City had agreed upon Abú Biker and that he (Berídeh), too, should do likewise. The chief replied, "we shall not owe allegiance to any

(j) Ch.36.P 6 (k) Kitáb ul Imamet vas Sitáyset by Ibn Quteibeh, Kamil by Ibn Athír, Tabri, Ibn Kheldún.

(l) 'Aqd ul Ferid, by Ibn 'Abdur Rabb.

(m) Ibn Kheldun.

(n) The tribe lived in the territory between Meccah and Medineh.

one except the owner of the house at whose door our banner stands." The Court called an emergent meeting to which Berideh was invited. He went and said that he had been told by the Prophet, "Ali is your leader after me", and that, therefore, he would obey the Prophet's command.^o

3. In view of Sa'd bin 'Obadeh's fury and the fanatical zeal of Berideh and his tribe it was inexpedient to bring any more pressure to bear upon 'Ali. The Caliph and Fátimah It was desirable, on the contrary, to conciliate him and to soften his grievances. At 'Umer's suggestion the Caliph went, accompanied by the former, to appease "Our Lady of Light," but she refused to see them. At their request 'Ali interceded and secured them audience. At their approach, however, the lady turned away her face and did not acknowledge their salute. "Pet of the Prophet", began Abú Biker, "We seem to have angered you in your matter of inheritance." "How is it", interjected Fátiméh, "that your heirs should succeed you and I should be deprived of the right to succeed my father". Abú Biker replied, "...verily I have heard your father say, 'We of the prophet class do neither inherit nor leave behind inheritance. Whatever we leave behind is public property'".^p "But", said Fátiméh, "have you heard the Prophet say, 'Fátiméh's pleasure is my pleasure, Fátiméh's displeasure is my displeasure...whoever displeases Fátiméh displeases me'". The two interviewers confessing that they had so heard the Prophet, Fátiméh continued, "In the presence of Allah and his angels, I declare that both of you have displeased me and angered

(o) Rauza tus Sefá and Ghunia tul Tálibín

(p) Ch.41.P.2, note (w)

me, you have not pleased me; when I meet the Prophet in the Hereafter I shall complain to him against both of you. By Allah, the Almighty, in every prayer I shall curse you for ever and ever"^q...And this ended the interview,

[q] Kitáb ul Imámet vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibeh. Sehíh Bukhári and Muslim.

CHAPTER XLIII. THE SUBURBAN OPINION.

Usameh's expedition—the suburban tribes invade Medineh—'Alí defends it—reason and significance.

1. It was an ominous bungle. Public opinion in the City had been 'cultivated'^r to some extent but it could not be considered entirely reliable or honest. Solving the problems. Abú Sufiyan, for instance, though muzzled through his two sons,^s was not very loyal. The idea of a referendum^t on the question of the Caliphate was yet in the air. 'Alí had twice refused allegiance,^u the Prophet's pious daughter had refused to see the Caliph's face.^v The Khezrij were sulky.^w The City talked and it had ample time and topic to talk about; the inrush of Berideh bin el Hoseib, at the head of the Bení Aslem,^x not only reinforced the talk but positively endangered the already precarious situation.

It was absolutely necessary to keep people from talking. The City had nothing particular to do except talking. Idleness collected crowds and crowds bred talk. The City had to be kept from talking. Something had to be placed before it that could strike its imagination and appeal to its sentiments. Usameh's^y expedition was that "something". It was the Prophet's last wish, its scene, lying at a long distance, was likely to keep people away and busy for a sufficiently long time; the chance of crossing arms with one of the greatest powers was sure to tempt the Arab warriors, the expectation of

(r) Ch. 39 PP. 2-4 (s) Ch. 39 P. 2 (t) Ch. 37 P. 5

(u) Ch. 40 P. 8, Ch. 41 P. 5 (v) Ch. 42 P. 3

(w) Ch. 42 P. 1 (x) Ch. 42 P. 2 (y) Ch. 30 P. 2

rich booty, in case of victory, was sure to attract the less warlike and more cautious of the citizens as well. The Prophet had commanded all Medinites to march under Usámeḥ and had placed the laggards-behind under his and God's curse... This was a good idea; but was it expedient? The position was this. Should anything adverse crop up the City was likely to be more of a danger than a support; it was better, therefore, to eliminate the danger. The presence and attitude of 'Alí was a source of strength. He had made it abundantly clear that he would not tolerate, much less encourage or champion, violence, either for establishing his own rights or for overthrowing Abú Biker. It could, therefore, well be afforded to send the City out to distant Múteh. The Prophet's army was, accordingly, summoned, under the Prophet's captain², Usámeḥ, to march to the Prophet's intended field of battle. The City's response was splendid. Every man of arms enlisted in the army of the Prophet. Medíneh was bled white of its fighting population and left utterly defenceless. The army marched to win laurels on the field of far-off Múteh, across the burning sands of Arabia. The City was left defenceless, but the City was denuded of dangerous talkers.

(2) 'Umer suggested placing the command in the hand of some one other than Usámeḥ. The Caliph "pulled 'Umer's beard" for proposing against the Prophet's decision. (Tabrî, Abul Fida, Ibn Athir). 'Umer's proposal does not seem to be very expedient. The Prophet's army could surely bring more recruits; change in the command would change its whole aspect. The army would become, with the change of the command, the Caliph's army. The Caliph who held only a disputed position in the City could get recruits only by letting the command unchanged. The Caliph, therefore, rightly reprimanded 'Umer in the matter.

2. The suburban tribes, refusing to recognise the Caliph, not only withheld the payment of taxes but actually led an invasion on the defenceless City. 'Alí, who had twice refused his fealty to the Caliph and was still the latter's rival, saw the danger.^a With his innate public-spirited selflessness, he, with his dauntless kinsman, Zubeir^b bin el 'Awám, busied himself in defending the helpless City against the Bedouin invasion. The invaders were repulsed and the City saved for Islam.

3. 'Alí had not given his allegiance to Abú Biker. It was a splendid opportunity for him to let the suburban tribes have their chance in the defenceless and 'Alí. City. The City and the tribal forces^c of violence had, hitherto, been asking him to lead them against the Caliph and he had refused the offer. Now that the tribes had themselves taken the initiative, and if the tribes, reinforced, as they would surely be, by other tribes, could take the City, there would be, for 'Alí, every chance of being raised to the Caliphate, without incurring the odium of having encouraged or used violence. On the other hand, had the tribes failed 'Alí's silence could not be blamed, nor could his neutrality be unjustifiable, even in the eyes of the Caliph. Any political adversary would have welcomed the invasion, but it was not so with 'Alí. He had, time and again, refused and emphatically refused to take, encourage or countenance any violent measures that could lead to the disintegration of the State. The bedouins had, no doubt, invaded Abú Biker but 'Alí saw, lurking in it, elements that were

(a) Ch. 38 PP. 4-6 (b) Ch. 37 P. 4

(c) Ch. 38 P. 2, Ch. 42 P. 2

capable of paralysing the heart of the Islamic State. It was to save the heart of Islam and, therefore, the whole body-politic of Islam that, in fighting against the invaders, he forgot his rival's personality.

On the heart of Islam, in letters of gold, is inscribed, large and deep, 'Ali's great forgetting of personalities, both of the rival Caliph and of himself, for the preserving of the Principles of Islam.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE PROVINCIAL OPINION.

The area under false prophets—Hezermant speaks against Abú Biker—so does Behrein—and the whole of Arabia.

1. The Theqifeh gathering had produced only five^d men to swear allegiance to Abú Biker; the Ansárs constituted merely a moiety of this odd number. Ijmá'.

The Khezrij, the most important section of the population,^e the Muhájirs, the Meccan chiefs^f were antagonistic to the Theqifeh Caliph; the City was arranging to revise^g his claims, the Bení Aslem, headed by their chief, Berideh^h, had declared themselves for 'Alí and actually raised their banner in front of 'Alí's door. 'Alí had eschewed violence, but the suburban tribes actually invaded the defencelessⁱ Capital of Abú Biker. The circumstances in the City or the neighbourhood could hardly be said to indicate any amount of "Unanimity" (Ijmá') in Abú Biker's favour, much less to prognosticate it in the distant provinces.

2. Before setting forth the provincial attitude towards the question of the Caliphate and in order to facilitate a better grasping of the situation it may be stated, at the outset, that by the time of the Prophet's demise practically the whole of Arabia had professed Islam. Three imposters, Museilimeh, Aswed and Tuleiheh had appeared during the later days of the Prophet and Seja'—a female—appeared after the Prophet's demise, pretending to be divinely Com-

(d) Ch. 36. P. 7, Ch. 37. P. 2. N. (Q)

(e) Ch. 36. PP. 2, 7. Ch. 42. P. 1. (f) Ch. 37. P. 4.

(g) Ch. 36. P. 5, (h) Ch. 42. P. 2, (i) Ch. 43. PP. 23.

missioned.

Museilimeh, a chief of the Bení Heníf, established himself among his tribesmen in Yemámeh, ashore the Persian gulf. Aswed took possession of Yemen and Nejrán; Tuleiheh, a chief of the Bení Asad, gained sway over the territory of Nejd. The prophetess of the Bení Teghleb gained, in her tribal territories of Musel (on the Tigris), strength enough to invade the prophet of Yemámeh. Aswed had been crushed during the Prophet's lifetime; the other 3 movements held ground in the respective areas, namely, Yemámeh, Nejd and the valley of the Tigris. Apart from this apostate area, the rest of the country continued steadfast in their loyalty to Islam. It is the opinion of this loyal portion of Arabia that is to be taken into consideration with regard to the Theqifeh verdict.

3. Historians^j have preserved the conversations of Ziyád, Abú Biker's representative in the province of Hezermaut, and the local chiefs, on the question of the Caliphate.

Háritheh bin Serráqeh:-

"Allah commanded us to obey the Prophet and we did; we shall hail, as Caliph, any one from *his family*, but *who is this son of Abu Qehafeh* (Abú Biker,) and what right has he to rule over us? We have no concern with him". Then he recited verses expressing his alliance with the Prophet's family and repudiating Abú Biker.

(j) Ibn Kheldûn, A'them Kûfi, and Rauza tul Ahbáb etc.

Asháth bin Qeis, of the Beni Kindeh:-

"Surely Arabia will never give to the Beni Teim (Abú Biker's clan) preference over the *Lords of Meccah*, (the Bení Háshím) who are the fount of the Apostolate. If it be *right* for *any one other than a Hashimite* to be the Caliph, then, *surely we are the best entitled* to it, for it is *our tribe* that has been, from time immemorial, *ruling* this part of the country".

Said the Bení Zubeid:-

"The *jealous* Muhájirs and Ansárs have seized the right from the right-holders. We know for certain that the Prophet did not die till he had appointed a kinsman of his to be our Caliph. Go, O Ziyád, go from us, your invitation is not the right invitation".

The Bení Dahl replied, through their spokesman, Hárith bin Mu'áwiyyeh:-

"You are inviting us to the allegiance of one regarding whom we have received no injunction from the Prophet.

Ziyád. You are right so far, but Muslims have 'unanimously' chosen Abú Biker."

Hárith. "If the idea is the product of the brain of you people, *why did you stand between us and the Prophet's family*; the Caliphate is *their* right".

Ziyád. "The Muhájirs and the Ansárs know these things better than you do"

Hârith. "By Allah, it is *jealousy* and *usurpation* of the rights of the *rightful*. We know it for certain that the Prophet did not leave the world till he had, with God's Command, appointed, from his family, a leader for our guidance. At Khumm,^k on the way back from the valedictory Pilgrimage, in the presence of more than a hundred thousand Arabs and their Sheikhs the camels' saddles were extemporised into a high pulpit on to which the Prophet ascended to declare to the vast audience, 'This 'Alî is my Caliph, and after me, your leader'. Your Caliph, Abû Biker and 'Umer bin Khettâb, too, gave their hands to 'Alî, saying, 'greetings and congratulations to thee, O Leader of Muslims'.¹ What was that allegiance; after that one, what is this allegiance you invite us to Beware, O Ziyâd, go hence. Your errand is not the righteous errand".

'Arfjeh bin 'Abdulleh followed:-

"By Allah, Hârith is right and says the truth. Turn this fellow (Ziyâd) out, for he follows a wrong chief. Was not Prophet *more solicitous* of the good of his people than these Muhâjirs and Ansârs who *pretend* to be the *custodians* of our weal".²

Begging allegiance from door to door and getting it nowhere Ziyâd returned to the Capital and submitted his report to the Caliph.

4. The Benî Beker, of the province of Behrein, apprised of Abû Biker's elevation to the Caliphate pro-

(k) Ch. 26 P. 4 (l) Ch. 26 P. 5

posed, "let us have Nu'mán bin Munzir as our
 Behrein. King. He is worthier and a better man...we
 are *better entitled to rule than the son of Abu Qehafeh* to col-
 lect the tithes and expend them amongst our people"...
 ...The Caliph's Representative flew from the province.

5. The volume and extent of this anti-Theqifeh
 movement may be appreciated by the simple fact that,
 No-tax with the exception of Meccah and a solitary
 Campaigners. town in Yemen, the whole of the Islamic
 State refused to recognise him Caliph, withheld from him
 the taxes, turned out his representatives and took to
 arms against the authority of Abú Biker.

"Within ten days",^m all Arabia was aflame against
 Abú Biker. "The signal of revolt flew from tribe to
 tribe until the Islam empire suddenly shrank to the
 cities of Mecca, Medina and Táyif. A strong body of the
 rebels even took the field and advancedⁿ....."

(m) Mas'údí. (n) The Successors of Mahomet, by W. Irving,

CHAPTER XLV

BRINGING ABOUT "UNANIMITY"

Abū Biker for abdication—Arabia withholds taxes from Abū Biker—declared apostate—Khālid a murderer and adulterer in Mālik's territory—Ziyād in Hezermaut—finances—and the Caliph,

1. With the City unreliable, the suburbs seditious, the Meccan Chiefs hostile, the provinces growling in contempt of his authority, no wonder, that the Caliph's heart quailed and he talked of abdication. He, nevertheless, continued in office. The tribes that, refusing to recognise Abū Biker's Caliphate, had withheld taxes from him—and they constituted practically the whole of Arabia—were declared^o apostates. A holy war was proclaimed against them. An

[o] The Mubājirs and Ansār notables according to Tabrī, Tārikh ul Khulefā, Tārikh ul Khemis etc, expressed the opinion that for non-payment of *Zekat* to Abu Biker the tribes had not been guilty of apostacy' and that, at any rate, no holy war could be levied against them. 'Umer bin Khettāb, 'Uthmān bin 'Effān and 'Ali were among those who held the opinion.

But justice or academic justification and political exigencies do not always go together. The newness of the Caliph's authority and his scanty resources demanded a strong stimulant to fire up public enthusiasm. In strongly religious communities a holy war is such a stimulant.

The non-payment of taxes which was calculated to stifle his government, led the Caliph to have recourse to the provision of Sacred Law. The present writer is of opinion that apostacy cannot be a ground for *Jihad* which is allowed only in defence of religion and against *aggressive* unbelievers, and not for purposes of establishing a new political authority. See Ch. 46 P. 3.

army was raised to fight the No-Tax movement. It is not necessary to follow the course of the army except in so far as is relevant to the scope of this work—to bring into relief the ‘unanimity’ attaching to the Theqifeh verdict or the popularity Abú Biker commanded amongst the Arabs and the means adopted to establish the Caliphate.

2. Khálid bin Welid who, to spite personal enemies, had so ignominiously betrayed the Prophet's commission The instru- in *re* the Beni Jezimeh,^p was put in command
ments of a division of the Caliph's army. 'Ikrimah bin Abú Jihl, another Meccan, was placed in charge of another division.

3. Dealing death and destruction in the way, Khálid reached the Bení Yerbú', who occupied territories Arabia in Arabia Patraea and had for their Sheikh,
Patraea Málik bin Nuweireh, “a man of high birth and great valour, an excellent horseman and a distinguished poet—all great claims on Arab admiration. To these may be added the enviable fortune of having for wife the most beautiful woman in all Arabia...Khálid was a downright soldier who had no linking for gentle means...he over-ran the country, giving his soldiery permission to seize upon the flocks and herds of the tribe...and make slaves of their children. Among the persons brought into his presence were Málik and his beautiful wife. The beauty of the latter dazzled the eyes even of the rough soldier but probably hardened his heart against her husband.

'Why', demanded he of Málík, 'do you refuse to pay zakat'.

'Because I can pray to God without these exactions' was the reply.

'Prayer without alms is of no avail', said Khalid.

'Does your master say so', demanded Malik haughtily'.

'My master!' echoed Khalid, 'and is he not thy master likewise? By Allah I have a mind to strike off thy head....'

'Are these also the orders of your Master', rejoined Malik with a saucer'.

'Again', cried Khalid in a fury, 'Smite off the head of this rebel'.

His officers interfered, for all respected the prisoner, but the rage of Khalid was not to be appeased.

'The beauty of this woman kills me,' said Malik significantly pointing to his wife,

'Nay', cried Khalid, 'it is Allah who kills thee because of thine apostasy'.

'I am no apostate', said Malik, 'I profess the true faith...'

It was too late, the signal of death had already been given. Scarce had the declaration of faith passed the lips of the unfortunate Malik when his head fell beneath the scimitar...."⁴

4. Málík grew on his head an abundance of long beautiful hair; his severed head was used as fuel to cook Khalid's Khálid's food." Having taken this food, he barbarity had the charming widow brought to his bed

(g) Successors of Mahomet, by W. Irving.

(r) Abul Fida.

the very^s night of her widowhood,^t to satisfy his long-standing^u desire to revel in her charms.

'Umer's son in the army testified to the fact of having heard the Muslim's call to prayer in Málík's camp and of having seen them pray in the Islamic way. 'Umer bin Khettáb urged upon the Caliph to pronounce, against Khalid, either a sentence of death for murdering the Muslim Málík, or for committing adultery^v with his widow.

The brother of the deceased, himself a great poet, visited the Capital for seeking judicial remedy for the murder. He was paid the blood-money, out of the state treasury,^w for his brother's and tribesmen's death, his ensalved tribesmen were set at liberty. The second Caliph, 'Umer bin Khettáb, during his reign restored, to the tribe, their looted property also.^x

The Caliph kept the captain unpunished and, without going into the details, merely said, "Shall I sheathe the sword of God—the sword which He himself has darwn against the ubelieving".^y

Ziyád, Abú Biker's governor of Hezermaut,^z wasf

(s) Tabri

(t) According to Muslim law a widow has to keep herself single for 4 months after her husband's death. No valid marriage can be contracted with her during the period.

(u) Ibn Khelikán. (v) Tabri

(w) Rauza tul Abbáb. (x) Sheristán's Milal ven Nehl.

(y) Abul Fida and the Successors of Mahomet, by W. Irving

(z) Ch. 44, P. 3

sent again, at the head of four thousand soldiers, to bring that province round.

5. Some of the tribes got panic-stricken, others thought it better to recognise the Caliph and pay in the taxes rather than take the chances of war.

Bení Kindeh The Bení Kindeh persisted and fearing the treachery of a local clan with which they had a long-standing feud, hastened to give battle to the governor and besieged him. On the governor's report the Head Quarters wrote to the Bení Kindeh,

"Let the Kindites know: The book revealed to the Prophet enjoins on all of us to follow Islam and uphold the Faith. I invite you to the same. Keep the faith and keep away from Satan's whisper. You have swerved from your 'convictions' because of the irritating Ziyád. He shall be withdrawn and supplanted by another. The bearer is instructed to send him back after conveying to you the epistle. You should now beseech forgiveness of God, the Most Beneficent and Forgiving. May He take us all on the right path".

Going through the conciliatory writing Ash'ath, the Sheikh, remarked to the emissary, "Because we delayed him fealty, your Leader attributes apostasy to us, but he takes no notice of Ziyád who has killed so many of our men."

"You have been dubbed apostates" informed the emissary, "not on account of your delay in swearing fealty but because of your going against the verdict of the Muhájirs and Ansárs..."

Before the emissary concluded his head fell under

the sword of a tribesman to whom his chief said, "God forgive your father! None could be a better reply". But in horror of the offence against the person of an emissary, two thousands of the allied tribesmen went over to Ziyád who gave battle only to get worsted and write again to the head-quarters for reinforcements.

6. The Caliph discussed the situation in his war-council. Abú Ayyúb, an Ansár chief, whose tomb at Constantinople is to this day a revered place of pilgrimage, advised, "call back the forces, the Kindites are a brave and proud people. Do not press them for money. In due time they will come round and tender you allegiance."

The Caliph laughed and said, "I will press for my share, even, in a six months' lamb, unless they tender me their allegiance."^a

(a) A'them Kúfi.

CHAPTER XLVI

BRNIGN ABOUT "UNANIMITY". II

The Caliph looks to 'Alí—'Umer disagrees—reasons—massaræ, enslevement and intolerance—Ash'ath debased and reconciled.

1. The war-council^b advised and dispersed. The dissentient Caliph called his prime-minister, 'Umer bin Khettáb, and discussed with him the desirability of sending 'Alí, "who", said the Caliph, "in excellence and valour, in rectitude and benignity, in statesmanly outlook, political acumen, prestige and far-sighted leadership is pre-eminent."^c

2. The appearance of the 'false prophets', the trouble at the frontiers, the undesirability of ushering in a civil war, even though it was likely to advance his personal interests, had led 'Alí to eschew all violence. Of course, he had refused to tender his fealty to the Caliph, but then he had wholeheartedly defended the Capital against the invaders. The Hezermaut tribes were not very different from the suburban tribes. They too were up in arms to fritter away national energy in fratricidal warfare. In the name of economising national energies, in the name of preserving domestic peace, 'Alí's large-mindedness could certainly be appealed to, to work for the stabilisation of Arabia, in the larger and sacred interests of Islam.

If thus appealed to, 'Alí was quite likely to respond to the appeal, and herein the Caliph had read 'Alí aright. In all probability 'Alí would go, and, if 'Alí went, the tribes were sure to lay down their arms and come to

(b) Ch. 45. P. 6 (c) A'them Kûh

peace. His very presence would bring it about^d. 'Alí's presence was the guarantee for the reappearance of peace amongst the tribes.

3. 'Umer quite agreed with the Caliph's estimate of 'Alí's character and prestige. But 'Umer knew also that 'Umer estimates 'Alí 'Alí, the "Lion of God", 'the Bayard of Islam', 'the knight without fear and without reproach,' could face any risks, make any sacrifices, but he could never be expected to do one thing—play with his conscience and principles. 'Alí was a stern believer in clean politics. Politics, here, had been given an artificial colouring of religion. Those who had refused to recognise the Caliph and, consequently, refused to pay him the taxes had been declared apostates.^e A political opponent, or, one adhering to the principles of religion but a non-conformist in matters of detail and, for the matter of that, even a (non-violent) Káfir could not, according to the laws of the Qurán, be the objective of a holy-war which had, on grounds of expediency, been declared against the tribes.

Under the circumstances, if 'Alí went, well and good, but should he refuse to go, the whole scheme would come under a cloud. The army itself was likely to dissolve. The Caliph had overlooked this aspect of the case. 'Umer, therefore, advised the Caliph, "your idea is good but for one dangerous element. 'Alí is very scrupulous, if he refuses to go or hesitates on the question of the tribesmen's apostasy, no body, thereafter, shall fight against them. The right thing would be to let

(d) Ch. 44 P. 3. *re* the tribes' preparedness to accept 'Alí as the Caliph.

(e) Ch. 45 P. 1 and note [o] thereto

‘Alí be in the Capital, as adviser, and send ‘Ikriméh bin Abú Jihl with the reinforcements”.^f

4. Deffidence, thus, defeated the idea of sending ‘Alí to end the war. ‘Ikriméh bin Abú Jihl, accordingly, led Murder and their inforcements, to relieve the besieged enslavement governor of Hezermout. It was a protracted and sanguinary war. The tribes, in Márib, went into their fort, hard pressed and inadequately provisioned, as they were, they sued for peace. Peace was granted on terms that were accepted. The tribes were to leave the fort. As they did so, their chiefs were suddenly arrested and beheaded, their families enslaved and property sent to the Caliph. The tribesmen were offered quarter if they confessed that they were apostates and the victors Muslims, that the slain of the tribesmen were fuel for Hell and those of the victors martyrs, destined for Paradise. . . One by one the tribes surrendered till the stronghold of Ash’ath, the chief, was reached. After many a valiant action the isolated chief sued for peace, which was granted.

5. Only ten persons, whose names the Chief was to submit in writting, were to be saved. The fated garrison drew up the list and sent it to the Governor. Barbarous. Ash’ath came and was surprised to hear from the vindictive Ziyád, “you want to save ten lives; your own name does not appear in the list you have submitted to me”. The brave chief called the Governor a cowardly soldier, a hair-splitting cheat and, warning him of the dangers of a war, renewed as the result of his brutality, advised him to refer the matter for the Caliph’s decision.

[f] A’them Kūn.

Horror of horrors! Executioners stand for their ghastly work; one by one the brave tribesmen are brought to fall under the tyrant's blade; one by one the beheaded corpses writhe, quiver and cool down. The Nero of a governor reclined luxurious on his *masnad* of brutal victory to witness and enjoy the death-dance of the brave sons of Islam. The ghastly work proceeded till no more than 60 men remained to reach the executioners and pass on to death. Opportunely, however, the Caliph's orders arrived to send the chief, in all honour, to the head-quarters. He was, accordingly, sent to Medineh, along with the 60 survivors.

6. The Caliph said to the chief,

The
Caliph and
the Captive.

"Praised be Allah Who gave me victory over you".

The Chief. "To tell the truth, the fault is yours, your governor Ziyád insulted and killed us".

'Umer Bin Khettáb.

"O Caliph, Ash'ath embraced Islam, read the Book, made the Pilgrimage to Meccah and, then, went apostate. In refusing to pay the taxes he repudiated Islam.

The Caliph. "And a Repuditor's blood must be spilt, his is an evil life",

The Chief. "The *Prophet's Caliph*, I never repudiated the Faith. But I purchase my life with your *kingly* mercy. I shall help Islam all my life...I am no apostate as 'Umer choses to describe me".

The Caliph granted him life and won his loyalty by marrying his sister to the chief.

The war against the No-Tax movement took more than half the time of Abú Biker's Caliphate.

CHAPTER XLVII.

'A LONGING, LINGERING LOOK BEHIND.

The Caliphate created discord—spent money for its security—fought No-Tax movement for more money—misused Religion for its politics—frustrated the Prophet by reviving tribalism—desecrated Islam's centre by showing the Caliph as a war-lord—the Mischief—raising 'Alī to the Caliphate could save the country—'Umer's *Obiter dictum*—what 'Alī did to save the country and the Caliph.

1, The Muhájir argument against the Ansárs, at Theqifeh, was that Arabia would not give its assent to the "Unanimity of Islam." latter's^g Caliphate. The Ansárs concurring with the Prophet's dictum^h, and in their anxiety to avoid national distemper, proposed to maintain the Caliphate in the Prophet's family.ⁱ But the three Muhájirs at Theqifeh wanting to avoid a Háshemite Caliphate,^j had hastily fixed it on Abú Biker. "This was a precipitate action", in the words of 'Umer, "only God saved us from its mischief".^k It was, in the words of the Ummeyyáde chief, Abú Sufián, a "conflagration" and a "storm" that could not be suppressed without bloodshed.^l The Caliph and his party had mistaken Theqifeh for Arabia, but the veteran chief Abú Sufián, experienced and astute leader of men that he was, did not mis-read the haughty instincts of his compatriots who were not likely to brook submission to the man of the "meanest of the Qureish clans".^m

It is not difficult to see, now, that the "Unanimity of Muslims", or "the Muhájir-cum-Ansár "Unanimity", at

g. Ch. 36. P. 5 h. *ibid.* i. Ch. 36. P. 6.

j. Ch. 36. PP. 5-6. k. Ch. 36. P. 8.

l. Ch. 38. P. 2. m. *ibid.*

Theqífeh, was a mere grandiloquence; the "Unanimity" was wrenched from unwilling Arabia at the point of the bayonet.ⁿ

The course of events immediately following the Theqífeh verdict, the trend of public opinion and the tregedy of the No-Tax campaign^o throws a lurid light on the question of the Caliphate. The Khezrij, one of the two Ansár tribes and the more numerous and powerful of the two, were^p, in a body, against Abú Biker. Sad bin 'Obádeh, their Sheikh, was violently inclined and had ceased to be on speaking terms with the Caliph.^q The Aus diplomats had sided with the Caliph but were now vacillating between him and 'Ali,^r the tribesmen were likely to join Sad^s and take the field against the Caliph. The Hashimites looked at it as a trick upon their rights. Abú Sufiyán, the Meccan Chief, despised the man of the "meanest of the Qureish clans" and was for violently over-throwing him.^t The Capital was for a review of the Theqífeh verdict.^u

'Ali's pacific attitude had cooled down the political ferment in the City and its suburbs. Most of the Metropolitan militia could not, therefore, be any serious trouble in the City. There was, of course, the constitutional agitation for getting a review of the Theqífeh verdict, but that was bound to follow peaceful lines. Voluble tongues may wag and sage heads may shake, but in time and with means the wagging of tongues and shaking of heads could be controlled easily enough. Work,^v as a

n. Ch. 44 PP. 3-5, Ch. 45, Ch. 46 o. ibid, Ch. 43 P. 2

p. Ch. 36 P. P. 5,7 q. Ch. 42 P. 1

r. Ch. 40 P. 6 s. Ch. 42 P. 1

t. Ch. 38 P. 2 u. Ch. 37 P. 5 v. Ch. 39 PP. 1-4

matter of fact, was already afoot in that direction and was producing satisfactory results. More was likely to be achieved in more time, but the uproar among the distant tribes was a disconcerting factor; it was bound to react strongly on the affairs of the City—and more so, because the tribes had not merely refused to recognise the Caliph but had begun by withholding the taxes.

2. And money^w had been distributed among the female population of the City; money, in the shape of a hereditary pension, had been offered to the Money. Hāshimite 'Abbās, as it must have been offered to many another. Diplomacy was a work in the City, diplomacy requires money, always more money. Friends were to be gratified and so gratified as to warm up the emulation of the lukewarm; the neutral had to be drawn closer; the opposition had to be appeased; and money could do a lot. Usāmeḥ had marched off to Muteh,^x more expeditions^y had to be equipped and financed, money was urgently required and immediately. Without money, the Government, like all other governments could not work: the tribes, by refusing to pay taxes, were stifling all governmental activities.

3. But how to realise the taxes? The tribes would not pay until and unless they recognised the Caliphate. Tribes' The tribes knew that Abū Biker was not the attitude. Prophet's nominee;^z they knew also that the Prophet had nominated 'Alī to be his successor;^a they did not hold the Theqifeḥ election to be binding,^b because they had not been consulted or invited there; the Muhājirs

(w) Ch. 39 P. 3 (x) Ch 43 P. 1. and N. (z). (y) Ch. 45, 46.

(z) Ch. 44 PP. 3-4, Ch. 42 P. 2 (a) *ibid*, Ch. 26 PP. 3-5

(b) Ch 42 P. 2, Ch 43 P. 2, Ch. 44 PP. 3-5

and Ansárs could not,^c by their vote, foist a ruler upon the rest of Arabia, and even if they did arrogate to themselves the prerogative of selecting a ruler for all Arabia, they ought to have kept in mind the Arabs' haughty mentality. They ought to have remembered that Arabia was clannish. The Arab belonged to his clan and owed allegiance only to his Sheikh who was both the symbol of his tribal power and prestige and the incarnation of the accumulated dignity of innumerable generations of hereditary potentates. The Sheikh, as the custodian of the dignity of his tribe as well as that of his great ancestors, must be convinced beforehand, that the man he was bowing to was a superior, in moral excellence, in birth, social status and manly qualities.^d No wonder that the tribesmen looked askance at Abú Biker of whose fathers they had never heard the tribal bards sing. They could have agreed to the Muhájir-cum-Ansár choice or refrained from disputing the latter's right to chose a Caliph, had they chosen some one from the Prophet's family.^e The Háshmites were the custodians of the Ka'beh, and the spiritual overlords of all Arabia; being a brave and generous lot, they could command the respect and imagination of the people. It was not surprising that the haughty Sheikhs and the brave sons of the desert refused to bow to Abú Biker of whom his own kindred contemptuously spoke as the one from "the meanest of the Qureish clans"^f. Therefore it was that Málik bin Nuweireh, not deigning to mention the Caliph's name, simply referred to him as Khálid's master,^g Hárithéh, inquired contemptuously, "who is this son of Abú

(c) *ibid* (d) Ch. 40 P. 4, Ch. 38 P. 2, Ch. 44 PP. 3-5

(e) Ch. 42 P. 2, Ch. 44 P. 3 (f) Ch. 38. P. 2

(g) Ch. 45 P. 3

Qeháfeh”^h In like manner Ash’ath could never believe that the Beni Teim could be preferred to the “Lords of Meccah”.ⁱ It is not necessary to multiply or repeat here the instances of the haughty attitude of the tribes towards the pretensions and the personality of the Caliph, but one thing stands out in bold relief—the number of provinces, the multiplicity of the tribes, the vastness of the area and population that protested against Abú Biker reduces the giant “Unanimity of Muslims” regarding the Theqifeh choice to the status of a punny pigmy.

4. Non payment of taxes was declared to be Apostasy, a holy war was proclaimed. The jurist and the legist felt No-Tax and expressed his doubts, but hearing, however, Apostasy the sounding of the bugle, and the tramping and neighing of the war-horse, up jumped the soldier at the clarion call of the holy war.... ‘Apostasy’ is killed, the soldiery has indulged in rapine, brutal adultery,^j wholesale manslaughter^k and personal vengeance, throughout the length and breadth of Muslim Arabia, The course of war presents a ghastly picture. How the soldiery of Islam plundered, murdered, enslaved^l, raped and deflowered the children of the Faith—and all this to coerce the “objectors”^m into submission to the Theqifeh Caliph.

The Caliphate is pink at the beak and the claw. Muslim Arabia has had its gruesome bath in the life-blood of the children of Islam. But is and was that all?

5. Mohammed had welded together into a nation the mutually repellent tribes of tribal Arabia. The

h. Ch. 44 P. 3 i. *ibid*

j. Ch. 45 P. 4 k. Ch. 46 PP. 4-5

l. *ibid*. m. Ch. 39 P. 4.

The Prophet and Theqifeh silken tie that bound together this bundle of tribes was the Prophet's work. The tribes were new to Islam and its socio-political idea of unification. The idea of nationhood had been sanctified by the founder of the Nation. The Theqifeh *coup* shattered that idea into pieces.

The *tribe*ⁿ again is seen over-shadowing the *nation*. "If it be right for any one other than a Hāshimite to be the Caliph, then surely *we* are best entitled to it, for it is our *tribe* that has been from time immemorial ruling over this part of the country".^o In like manner, the Benī Beker, in Behrein, began to evaluate the comparative right of a local ruler and the son of Abū Qehāfeh. Nu'mān is better entitled to be our king than the son of Abū Qehāfeh^p....we are better entitled to rule than the son of Abū Qehāfeh".^q

The Theqifeh verdict and the consequent turmoil produced the unfortunate impression that personal ambition, with some sort of backing, could win the Caliphate for any one. If one man could aspire to it why not another. The Arab is seldom an individual and always a member of his tribe. The unit is not the man but the tribe. From nationhood Arabia relapsed into tribalism. Islam had attempted a world-wide nationhood. This relapse into tribalism gave a blow to that great idea of the greatest of practical idealists—Mohammed, the Prophet.

Could or could not the blow be evaded and the war avoided by entrusting the Caliphate to some one whom all would be prepared to accept. Facts and events indicate

n. Ch. 34 PP. 1, 4, Ch. 36 PP. 2-6, Ch. 38 P. 2, Ch. 44 PP. 3-4

o. *ibid.* p. *ibid.* q. *ibid.*

that 'Ali could succeed in maintaining "the Unanimity" of Islam and preserving the idea of a universal nationhood. Circumstances ruled otherwise. And Arabia has never been able to emerge out of its exclusive tribalism.

6. 'Umer's apologetic *dictum* that his action, jointy with his comrades at Theqifeh, was "a precipitate act but God saved us from its mischief"^s may be
 Mischief correct so far as it concerns his person and party: of course, the Theqifeh Muhájirs came out unscathed out of the storm, but Arabia enjoyed, alright, its bath of blood and misery on account of the "mischief".

7. With the Khezrij hostile and vindictive, the religious-minded among the Ansárs yearning to place the Caliphate in the Prophet's family, the
 Ali's attitude Háshimites resentful, the constitutionalists desirous of reviewing the Theqifeh verdict, Abu Sufiyán—the chief of the Umeyyádes and the active mind and brain of the Beni 'Abd Menáf, whose word none among the Qureish could gainsay^t—prepared to inundate the streets and alleys of Medineh, to wipe out the son of Abú Qehafeh, "of the meanest of the Qureish clans", the Capital was a veritable volcano. The suburbs were up in arms against the Caliph and so were all the provinces. Medineh was a town besieged by the State of which it was the Capital.^u Imagine, in this town, 'Ali taking up arms against the besieged Caliph. The Khezrij *vendetta* against their "humiliators"^v at Theqifeh, the frenzied fanaticism of the Arabs, who in loyalty to the Prophet's

r. Ch. 34 PP 1, 4, Ch. 36 PP 3-8 Ch. 37 PP 4-5 Ch. 40 PP 6-8, Ch. 42 PP. 1-2, Ch. 44 PP. 3-4 Ch. 46 PP. 1-3

s. Ch. 36 P. 8

t. Ch. 34 P. 4. u. Ch. 44. P. 5. v. Ch. 36 P. 7

memory hated to take the Caliphate out of his family^w, with the alliance of Abú Sufiyan's hordes inundating the metropolitan streets and alleys,^x would do things which made 'Umer shudder. Truly and sincerely was he grateful to the Deity when he said, "Allah saved us from the mischief" of "the precipitate act at Theqifeh".^y

But the historian, while distributing credit in this world of causation eliminates the Deity and restricts his attention only to men. 'Ali's biographer may feel justified in placing the credit at his hero's feet, and by removing one and inserting another word make the *dictum* harmonise with history and make 'Umer say,

'It was a precipitate act at Theqifeh
'but 'Ali saved us from its mischief".

Abú Biker
Khelifeh tul Muslimín
AND
Amír ul Mominín

2. Rabi'. I. II. H—22 Jamádi. II. 3. H.
June. 632. A. D—24 August. 634 A. D.

CHAPTER XLVIII

'ALI'S GRIEF.

What 'Ali lost in Mohammed's death—the Caliphate—'Ali, a political suspect—his children—his bereaved wife doubly sad because of Fedak decesion—'Ali's great heart cries—death of Fâtimeh—absentees at the Prophet's funeral absentees again at his daughter's funeral also.

1. In the death of Mohammed, 'Ali had lost a relative he had first opened his eyes to look upon,^z a god-father whose truthful tongue was his first suck^a in the world, who had christened him^b and given him his first bath.^c In Mohammed's death 'Ali had lost a guardian who had kept him, since early childhood, from the ways of the "ignorant" and the idolatrous.^d 'Ali had lost a Teacher who had brought him up from early childhood and led him on the road of and to ethical progress upto the highest heaven of moral evolution, where he could be announced to be the Prophet's "brother in this World and the Hereafter^e and likened to Aaron^f and Jesus.^g 'Ali had lost his first cousin and twin spirit, the Prophet. How lovingly and gratefully did 'Ali relive his early days when he spoke of the Prophet that had gone. "In my boyhood you took me in your lap and hugged me to your bosom, you rested me in your bed, gave me the warmth and contact of your sacred person of which I enjoyed the perfume. I used to follow you about as the she-camel's young does follow its mother. You daily taught me a lesson of high ethics

(z) Ch. 2 r. 3 (a) Ibid

(b) Ch. 2 P. 4 (c) Ibid

(d) Ch. 4 (e) Ch. 15 P. 3

(f) Ch. 22 P. 7 (g) Ch. 23 P. 3

and then asked me to put it in practice. For profound meditation, you retired, every year, for a month's seclusion in the solitudes of the hills of Hirá where I visited you and none other could visit you".^h 'Alí had lost a loved guardian, for whom he had incurred the odium of his playmates.ⁱ 'Alí had lost a revered Master, for whom and for whose teachings he had braved the scoffs and ridicule of his kinsmen on the occasion of the "Call to the Kinsmen",^j had occupied his death-enveloped bed during the night of the Flight,^k and then, renouncing his hereditary religio-political chieftainship, followed the Master in exile and voluntary poverty. 'Alí had lost the Master whose battles he had fought and won as none other had done, and for protecting whose Faith he had never considered his life his own. 'Alí had lost the Teacher at whose feet he had drunk deep and long from the fount of knowledge and wisdom to be able to say. "Out of me flows a river of knowledge, strong, great and gushihg. My knowledge and erudition has an altitude, flying towards which the fast-flying eagle drops down its anxious-eager wings",^l or to invite the seekers after knowledge to "inquire from me before I go from amongst you".^m 'Alí had lost a twin-spirit; with the same blood running in their veins, the eternal cousins were united in association and aspiration, in ideas and ideals, in love and labour and in weal or woe. The one was the "City of Knowledge" and the other its "gate". In Mohammed's death Arabia had lost its maker, 'Alí lost more—the "she camel's young" had lost the parent whom it used to follow. And 'Alí cried in grateful memory and soul's

(h) Nehj ul Befagheh (i) Ch, 8 P. I

(j) Ch 9 (k) Ch. 12, 13

(l) Nehj ul Belágheh (m) Ibid

agony, "My parents be thy sacrifice, in thy death cease for us Apostolate and Heavenly Revelation. Thy death is for us a great calamity even as thy being with us was a shield against all calamities. Thou hast enjoined on us patience and forbidden us lamentation or we would drain out our tears to the last. My parents be thy sacrifice! Remember us to thy Lord and forget us not".^a

2. Added to this agony of the soul was the matter of the Caliphate. His claim, based on merit and service, ^{The misplaced Caliphate.} had been sanctified by the Prophet's declaration.^o Not that he wanted it out of personal vaingloriousness but he felt the loss because in overlooking the Prophet's choice, ambition, in its haste, had set sons of Islam flying at each other's throats. To him the world was worth not more than—in his own picturesque words—"a goat's sneeze". He regretted, not the losing of the Caliphate but its misplacing. In the riotous armageddon the misplacing of the Caliphate had created, he saw the undoing of what Mohammed had done for the unification of Arabia's warring tribes into a brotherhood.

3. The noble-minded son of a noble race was disgusted to find himself treated as a political suspect. He ^{Political suspect.} had done all that lay in his power to avert the storm that was brewing in the City, and yet he was being shadowed by mean informers and spies. He felt it and loathed it.

4. His children, the princes of a haughty race, respected and looked up to, till yesterday, were

(n) Ibid (o) Ch 26 PP. 4, 5. (p) Ch 20 P. 5

shunned and avoided, as the breed of a suspected house, by the present-day lions. The little ones, too young to understand the changed atmosphere of the City, looked with doleful eyes at their parents and expected 'Ali to supply the affection and regard which the little innocents now missed everywhere.

5. 'Ali's great and sensitive heart could find relief in the company of his good consort. But alas! the Prophet is dead and Fátiméh is fatherless. Her loving young soul cried and wept, wept and cried as only a daughter could do for a father. Out of respect for the neighbours' comfort she built a house near the deceased father's grave; night after night, till she lived, she kept a tearful vigil in the "House of mourning".^(q) Upon 'Ali lay the onerous duty of consoling his sad consort in her great bereavement. To deepen her grief, had come the confiscation of her Fedak Estate.^(r) It was a double blow. Mere economic loss would be easier to bear for the lady who loved her voluntary poverty, but the Caliph, the head of the executive, sitting in judgment in a claim against himself, had pronounced her claim to be baseless.^(s) She took the executive ruling to heart and refused to see the Caliph's face ever afterwards.^(t) 'Ali was too helpless to vindicate her integrity; he saw that the verdict had come, much on account of his position in the matter of the Caliphate.^(u)

6. Sorely grieved at the unsavoury turn the affairs had taken, lonely and single-handed, 'Ali had to drop his rights, avoid suspicion, save his neck, pat his children, console his consort in her great

(q) Brit. ul. Huzn. (r) Ch. 40 P. 10. (s) Ch. 41 P. 2.

(t) Ch. 42 P. 3. (u) Ch. 40 P. 10. (v) Ch. 41 P. 5.

bereavement and in bridging over the Fedak escheat. Deprived of the holy company and soothing sympathy of his great and loving cousin, the Prophet, bereft of spiritual sympathy abroad and confronted with a grief-stricken family at home, 'Alí's great soul pained. Distressed and anguished, 'Alí's robust heart cried in agony. "Oh, how I felt it! Dust of grief and thorns of affliction pricked my eyes, sobbings of sorrow and anger held my throat in a deathly noose as I beheld my rights being looted and plundered before my very eyes. I could never relish the company of the ignorant but when they stooped low, perforce, I accompanied them; when they soared high I joined wings with them. My object was to capture them and to lead them aright—even as the trained pigeon, in order, ultimately to bring them to the right home, flies in company with the jungle pigeon".^w What calm of a great heart in agony, and resolve of a noble mind that is lonely.

7. Three months and five days, or according to another version, two months and a half of sorrow, pain and "Our Lady anxiety have passed over 'Alí since the day of Light", of the Prophet's demise. 'Alí comes home to find kneaded flour being leavened; clay in a corner lying watered to be prepared into kitchen-plaster and Fátiméh, who has been ill for sometime, busy about the toilet of her little ones. Intuition leads 'Alí to ask her, "why should you, darling, get busy, simultaneously, in the triple engagement, in your delicate health?" Tears escape the eyes of the Prophet's pious daughter and she replies, "Father of Hasan, I dreamt and saw my father. I think my end is near. I am busy in my children's

toilet; they are shortly going to be motherless". Tears fill 'Ali's eyes and those of the little ones. 'Ali' sends the children to the Prophet's mausoleum to pray for their mother's early recovery. "Fátimeh!" says 'Ali, "the Prophet's death is yet fresh, and you are talking of your Departure".

8. Fátimeh is weak and asks the maid to do the cooking, and lies down on the pillow...the children return, the maid lays the table for them. "But
 Parting words we will not dine without mother", protest the little innocents. "Mother is unwell and can not sit with you", the maid tries to expostulate with the young darlings... but they had run into the mother's room... The loving mother, who has always given them a welcome smile, lies unconscious on her pillow and the grief-stricken 'Ali sits beside her; the scene puzzles the children... it fills them with vague fear. Slowly she gains consciousness, sees her darlings, speaks to them with a forced pleasantness and coaxes them back to the dining table and the Prophet's mausoleum. "Father of Hasan", she says to her husband, "pillow me in your lap, I am only a few moments more". "I am too weak, now", is wrenched out of 'Ali's truthful heart, "to hear you speak so, darling." "I am on a journey which must be undertaken, mine is a sad and saddening talk, but darling, let me have it", says she. The emotion proves too much for her failing strength and she swoons. 'Ali's tears of loveful warmth drip down on her cold cheeks, the dying wife opens her eyes, looks at him and the tears straining from his godly eyes. She strings herself up for a last, loving, consoling effort to say, "It is time, 'Ali, for parting messages; it is not time for mourning yet. Forgive me my failings; after me, love my children; bury me

under cover of the night, that people may not see it; come, often, to my grave, it shall comfort my soul, for I love you"... The objects of her last solicitude, the children, arrive, but, exhausted by her great emotion, Fátiméh relapses into unconsciousness. "Open your eyes, mother", impatient childhood makes its demand of innocent tyranny. The dying mother obeys the call of love, regains consciousness, opens her eyes, kisses the little intruders and cojoles them back to the resting place of their grandfather, her father, the Prophet.

The children depart, the lady, the soul and specimen of Muslim piety and cleanliness, asks the maid for water, has a bath and a change of dress, spreads a matting on the floor, lies down on it on her right side, turns her face towards the Ka'beh, places her head on the pillow and balances it on her hand under the cheek and asks the maid for a bit of camphor. Taking the sweet disinfectant she says, "let me be alone. I shall pray to my God'.

9. The maid closes the door. The Prophet's pet—whom the Master loved and respected for her great Fátiméh's qualities of the head and the heart, the lady last prayer whose invaluable gift to female humanity is her famous dictum, "chastity is woman's best ornament", the lady whom the Prophet counted among the four greatest women, prays—prays to her God, for "the right guidance of her father's people," prays for her salvation, for Divine Mercy.

An uncontrolled cry escapes the maid's choking throat. Involuntrily, she hurries into the prayer-room. She is requested to go but call at the door a bit later

and come in should she get no reply. The maid leaves the room, stands listening to her dear lady's words of prayer and thanks-giving...The voice becomes silent. She calls out to her prayerful mistress. There is no reply. She steps in, goes to Fátiméh. Fátiméh is...with the Lord.

10. Ali's elegy is still extant:—

"Friends united must part;

'Ali's elegy "Affliction is easy to bear except that of
sundered Love.

After the Prophet, Fátiméh was my glory.

This is a truism, self-evident: that friends
are united but not for ever".

11. Placing her in her last resting-place, anguished
'Ali said, "Greetings to you, O, Prophet of God, from
Sundered me and from your daughter who is coming to
Love. you, and has hastened to join you. Prophet
of God, your daughter's death leaves me weak and for-
lorn. The affliction has withered me and sapped my
strength. But yes, there is the precedent. I kept my
patience at your demise. At that great calamity and
heart-rending grief I steadied myself. I could then bear
to inter you, your blessed soul parted between my lap
and my throat. Verily, 'for God are we and to Him do
we Return'. She was a trust and a dear souvenir. The
trust has been called back and the souvenir withdrawn.
Long and deep is my sorrow and grief. Soothing sleep
is not for me till the Lord wills for me your restful
abode. Your daughter will tell you of my lot here. It is
not long that you have been from here, time has not yet
faded your memory, but ask her about me, down here,
Greetings to you and to your pious daughter. Greetings.

from a forlorn friend to friends that have gone ahead; greetings from a friend who never felt satiated with, or was tired of, your sweet company. Good bye, Adieu. If I go hence, it is not because I wish not to stay on; if I tarry here, it is not because I suspect your great souls shall bless me less for a brief visit or that the Lord will curtail His reward promised to the patient".

12. From the graveyard, 'Alí came back to a desolate home, the home of motherless children, the home, no longer cheered and illumined by the presence of the sweet, young wife who was the soul of homely comfort, pious, learned cheerful, witty, obedient and sublime, holding' 'a rank among poets'.^x "A remarkable woman for the age in which she lived, clever, accomplished and witty. Her sermons, songs and aphorisms serve as an index to her strength of character and nobility of mind. Her virtues gained her the title of 'Our Lady of Light', by which name she is known among the Muslims. She was tall, slender and endowed with great beauty which caused her to be called Az Zahra, the beautiful"^y Lonely Alí was, now, lonelier, alone in the midst of bustling, quarrelling, scheming and counter-scheming crowds of Arabs. The wife, a kindred spirit, after 'Alí's own heart of gold, a portion of Mohammed's own sacred personality had died and was buried under cover of the night. The politicians, who had not time to join the funeral of their dead Prophet did not join in conveying the coffin of his daughter to her last resting-place. The world was worldly, Fátiméh living was high above the world, and Fátiméh dead went

(x) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali.

(y) A Short History of the Saracens, by Amir Ali.

to her God unaccompanied by the worldly world. 'Ali had buried the Prophet and 'Ali interred the Prophet's daughter.....The Prophet's family lived in the world but apart from it.

CHAPTER XLIX

FIELDS FRESH AND PASTURES NEW.

Military attractions—prospects in intrigue-ridden Persia of the boy-King Perwiz—Híreh, Eila, Muzár and Ulleis—booty.—Khálid and sword v/s Islam—Anbár, 'Ein ul Temer—Daumeh tul Jendel—Husíd, Khenâfis, and Muzih—'Ein ul Temer, Feráz—Syria invaded—Abù 'Obeideh—Yezid, 'Amr bin 'Aas, Sherhebil—Khálid bin Sa'eed, "Mu'âwiyyeh—Arab v/s non-Arab—Yermùk—booty—free-booters.

1. The trumpets of war blowing; the war horses neighing and tramping; the military banners, high up in the air, waving and fluttering; the solid mass of youthful humanity gathering, swelling, and marching in and out, to and fro, and through the streets and squares of a city and round about it; the surging and waving of an army in ordered file and phalanx; the clanging of arms and the clamour of men; the glittering swords and the burnished spears; the well-strung bows and the straight-worked arrows; the glistening helmets and the well-polished armours—this picturesque exhibition of national strength and glamour of prestige has always had a terrible fascination for man, and all the more so for the wild son of Arabia. The new-won glory of the recent No-Tax war, the name won and fame achieved, the loot acquired and beautiful slaves obtained, urged the soldiers to fields fresh and pastures new. It urged those who had then lagged behind, not to let the opportunity slip through their fingers. The jurist or the philanthropist may doubt or discuss the reasons for the war, but the emotional Arab took up his arms and rushed to the field of battle.

2. Khálid bin Welid and Muthenna, the General of

the tribe of the Beni Beker, after crushing the 'False prophets' in Arabia Patræa and subduing the No-Tax campaigners marched on to the territories of Chaldæa, known among the Arabs as 'Irâq—Arab—lying to the north-east of the then Arabia. It formed a part of the great Persian Empire extending over the whole of modern Persia, Bactria and all the inferior provinces of Central Asia to the confines of Tartary and portions of India, besides 'Irâq and Mesopotamia.

The large and rich empire had greatly been weakened by continued wars with the Byzantines and internecine quarrels. The Persian Emperor Perwiz was murdered (628. A. D.=7 H.) by his son who ascended the throne by beheading his seventeen brothers. The tyrant wished to crown his misdeeds by marrying his step-mother who committed suicide. Within eight months of his accession the parricide died leaving the crown to his son who was murdered within a year and a half to be succeeded by a usurper, who was killed within 40 days of his usurpation. He was succeeded by Purân Dukht, a royal lady, who was deposed after 16 months. Her successor was killed in less than a month and was succeeded by another unfortunate youth who was beheaded within a few days of his coronation. His successor was Âzermi Dukht, sister of Purân Dukht, daughter of Perwiz. In 11. H. or 13. H. (634-A. D) Yezd Gerd, a grand on of Perwiz, was hunted up from his hiding, to sit on the Imperial throne of the Khusros. He being a boy of 16, Âzermi Dukht was appointed regent. It was during the reign of this boy-king that intrigue-ridden and chaotic Persia was invaded by Arabia's hordes.

3. The Persian governor of Chaldæa fought on the

frontier and was defeated with heavy loss. Khálid pressed on to Híreh, the Capital of the province, which fell after some resistance. Arabs stormed the palace, subdued the kingdom and imposed on it an annual tribute of 70 thousand pieces of gold (Dinárs) and sent the captured son of the princely governor to Medineh, as prisoner.

4. At Eilá, the Arabs captured Hurmuzán, the Persian governor and his crown, worth a hundred thousand gold Dinárs (it being one of those that the Eilá, Muzár, Ulleis and Híreh seven first class viceroys of the Persian "King of Kings" were privileged to wear.) The State-share (one-fifth) of the booty at Muzár, which fell next, gave the Caliph the opportunity of remarking to 'Umer that it was Khálid's work whom he ('Umer) had recommended for capital punishment.² The sight of the booty captured at Ulleis drew from the Caliph the exultant remark that womankind could not produce the like of Khálid. Híreh rebelled to be subdued and have its tribute trebled. The fall of Híreh led the neighbourhood to purchase peace at two million Dinárs of annual tribute.

5. Khálid now blundered into sending a supercilious message calling upon the Emperor to purchase peace by accepting Islam or paying tribute. This Sword or Islam (besides leading to the notorious phrase "sword or Islam" that the Faith has found so difficult to refute) insult, both to the Imperial prestige and the National Church led the Persians to shelve their jealousies and pool their resources together to throw the invaders out of the Imperial territories.

6. The Persians were, however, defeated at Anbár. The citizens sued for peace. Peace was granted them if they left the city and their belongings for the victors. Khálid then marched on to the next Persian stronghold at 'Ein ul Temer. It was reduced and the citizens were ordered out of the town. As they came out of the citadel the soldiery was put to death, the town pillaged and the population enslaved; among them were 40 students who were in the town for religious studies.

7. The Governor of Daumeh tul Jendel, hearing of Khálid's approach, fled but was arrested and beheaded along with his companions. The rest of the fugitives fled back to the town which ultimately surrendered. With the exception of the Bení Kelb, the population went to the executioner, females were enslaved and sold. Khálid purchased for himself a beautiful damsel of the town.

8. The camps at Huseid and Khenáfis were taken; the Persians fled to Mezih where Khálid surprised them at night. Two Muslim sojourners also got killed. 'Umer bin Khettáb demanded capital punishment for Khálid on account of the two murders. The Caliph, however, paid the blood-money out of the State-treasury and exonerated Khálid, because "such risks naturally went with residence amongst unbelievers".

9. The Persians concentrated at 'Ein ul Temer but were so routed that even Khálid had never before killed as many men nor had his soldiery secured as much booty and captured as many slaves. Pressing on his advantage, he routed the Persians upto Feráz, a Byzantine town, where the Imperial forces opposed him to be defeated with heavy loss, amounting

to a hundred thousand killed in battle and. pursuit. The enemy requested for quarter which was refused.

The Syrian Expedition.

10. "The long and desolating wars between the Persian and Byzantine Emperors....had exhausted those once haughty powers and left their frontiers open to aggression. In the second year of his reign, therefore, Abú Biker prepared to carry out the great enterprise".^a The successive Muslim victories in Persia led to the conquest of Syria--territories lying between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, including Phœnicia and Palestine--which acknowledged the sway of the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, of Constantinople, whose governor-general at Antioch administered it through four governors with head quarters at Palestine, Hems, Damascus and Jordon.

11. The Caliph sent Yezid bin Abú Sufiyán bin Hereb, with an army to the Syrian frontier, who defeated Abú Obeldéh in chief command. an imperial detachment and, after a few more skirmishes, returned with a large booty to the Capital. This led to another expedition to the land of fabulous riches and wealth. Khálid bin Sa'eed bin el 'Aas was put in command of the army but 'Umer objecting to the appointment, because the officer had sided with 'Ali in the matter of the Caliphate and had delayed his allegiance to the Caliph, he was deprived of the command. On the recommendation of 'Aiyeshéh, however, he was appointed a recruiting officer for the army. The Caliph appointed 'Amr bin el 'Aas to march to Palestine, Abú 'Obeideh bin Jerráh to Hems, Yezid bin Abú Sufiyán to Damasous and Sherehbíl to Jordon.

(a) The Successors of Mahomet, by W. Irving.

The four armies were to act in concert under Abú 'Obeideh to whom was entrusted the general command in Syria, for "he stood high in the esteem and confidence of Abú Biker, having been one of the two whom he had named as worthy of the Caliphate".^b

12. The Caliph harangued his people:-

Arab v/s
non-Arab.

"All Arabs are descended from a common ancestor. I am determined to send Arab forces to fight the Byzantines. Whosoever from amongst you wins, will get riches and renown, and whosoever meets death, shall have raised his banner in Paradise. The martyrs' reward is with the Lord, and the reward is priceless and beyond man's computation". Orders were sent to Meccah, Táyif, Yemen etc, and the army marched off to Syria. Muáwiyyeh bin Abú Sufiyán was in charge of the reserves.

13. The Emperor sent 90 thousand men against 'Amr, 40 thousands against Yezíd, 60 thousands against Abú 'Obeideh and 50 thousands against Sherehbíl. The Arabs pooled together their forces. Khálid bin Welíd was also drafted from the Chaldæan field who arrived with his 9 thousand soldiers. Thus, against the tremendous odds of the Byzantines, the Muslims presented 42 or 46 thousand men and fought a pitched battle at Yermúk.

14. The Imperial forces committed the strategic blunder of encamping in a low valley of the river Yermúk, while the Muslims stood on the surrounding heights. In the battle (August 30. 634. A.D.) 140 thousand men of the Imperial army

Spotis.

(b) *ibid*, also see Ch 36. F.P. 1, 5.

lay slain, another 40 thousands remained as prisoners of war. After deducting the State-share (one-fifth), each one the Muslim cavalymen got 24 thousand and each of the foot soldiers got 8 thousand Mithqáls of gold, by way of booty, besides silver and other moveables.

15. The news of the foreign acquisitions spread like wild fire throughout Arabia. "Hosts of adventurers ^{The soldiers'} hurried to Medina from all parts and especimind. ally from Mecca. All were eager to serve in the cause of the faith now that they had found it crowned with conquest and rewarded with riches... Abú Biker was disposed to gratify their wishes but Omer, on being consulted, strongly objected. 'The greater part of these fellows', said he, 'who are so eager to join us now that we are successful are those who sought to crush us when we were few and feeble. They care not for the faith, but they long to ravage the rich fields of Syria and share the plunder of Damascus. Send them not to the army to make brawls and dissensions. Those already there are sufficient to complete what they have begun. They have won the victory let them enjoy the spoils'.

"In compliance with this advice Abú Biker refused the prayer of the applicants. Upon this the people of Mecca, and especially those of the tribe of Koresh sent a powerful deputation, headed by Abu Sufiyan, to remonstrate with the Caliph. 'Why are we denied permission', said they, 'to fight in the cause of our religion? We are your brethren in the faith as we have ever been your kindred in blood, and hereby take upon ourselves to fight in the common cause. Let there, then, no longer be jealousy and envy between^c us'."

CHAPTER L

THE CALIPH APPOINTS A SUCCESSOR.

Abú Biker's death-His will-the scribe writes 'Umer's name for succession-the talk in the town-the Companions and the army object to 'Umer's nomination-Abú Biker's last thoughts.

A bath on a cold day brought the Caliph fever which ended fatally in about a fortnight. During the Caliph's illness 'Umer led public prayers.

1. Towards his end the Caliph called 'Uthmán bin 'Effán, one of the Secretaries of State and dictated to ^{The will and} him: "This is the testament of Abú Biker bin ^{the scribe} Abú Qeháfah for the guidance of Muslims. To be your Caliph I appoint....". The Caliph fainted, anticipating him, the Secretary completed the document by adding the name of 'Umer bin Khettáb. Regaining consciousness the Caliph desired the Secretary to read what had been dictated so far. The Secretary read out the document including the name he had written in anticipation of the Caliph's dictation.^d Glorifying Allah the Caliph asked the secretary, "you thought I might never regain consciousness and that people would quarrel over my succession. Was it, therefore, that adding 'Umer's name you completed the document?"^e The Secretary affirming the motive assigned to him, the Caliph blessed him and directed him to write on.... "take orders from him and obey him". The document was placed in a sealed cover and entrusted to the Caliph's chief-slave, with orders to deliver it to the assembled Muhájirs, Ansárs and the Companions.^f Word was then sent to the people.

(d) Ibn Athir, Tabri and Ruza tul Ahháb

(e) Ibn Athi'r etc.

(f) Ibn Athir, Tabri and Kitáb ul Imámet vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibeh

2. As 'Umer went about asking people to assemble, a wag asked him as to the contents of the document. "I do not know," replied 'Umer, "but whatever they be, I shall be the most obedient to the document". "If you do not know", rejoined the wag, "I shall make a guess for you. Last time you got him the Caliphate. This year he is giving it to you". The people assembled; there was excitement and noise: 'Umer went about asking men to quiet down, listen to, and obey the Caliph's command.^a Leaning on his wife, the invalid Caliph appeared at the window to address the multitude. "Will you agree" spoke the Caliph, "if I appoint for you a Caliph. By Allah, I have given it my *best thought*, and I am not nominating any of my kinsmen. I appoint 'Umer bin Khettab to be your Caliph; listen to him and obey him". The document containing the Caliph's testament was then read out to the assemblage.

3. The Companions interviewed the Caliph to say that 'Umer was short-tempered and ill-worded and that a good temper and sweet disposition was the first essential in the head of the State, and that 'Umer's nomination would be a matter hard to explain and difficult to justify on the Day of Judgment.^b

4. The Syrian expeditionary forces were aware of the Caliph's illness; lack of further news made them restive. They suspected that the Caliph had died and was succeeded by 'Umer; if that were so, they said, they would refuse to recognise him and depose him.ⁱ In fact the news of the Caliph's death

(a) Tabri

(b) Ibn Athir, Tabri, Rauza tus Sefá and Tàrikh ul Khemis.

[i] Kitáb ul Imámet vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibeh

that had reached the camp before the battle of Yermük had to be kept secret until it was over.ⁱ

5. When toil and turmoil of life is well-nigh over, heat and excitement of life and life's ambition have run their natural course, death, the termination of
 Demise strife and struggle comes as a welcome release. In the presence of the Eternal Reality and the Great Infinite, becomes vivid, the transitory pettiness, the ridiculous insignificance of man, his desires and ambitions. In the Great Presence, Man gets bestowed upon him, for retrospection and introspection, an opportunity that is the exclusive privilege of those who are on their death-bed. Off and apart from the gross and the material that he was leaving behind the Caliph thought and soliloquised:

"I am sorry, I should not have violated the sacred privacy of the house of Fátiméh,^k the Prophet's daughter, even if men gathered there to work against me....I should not have assumed the Caliphate at Theqifeh but should have hung it round 'Umer's neck or Abú 'Obeideh's and contended myself with a ministry".

The Caliph had the public accounts examined. Finding 8 thousand Dirhems overdrawn by him, he directed his heirs to make good the deficiency. Thus clearing his accounts, the Caliph, after a rule of a couple of years and a quarter, ended his worldly career, on 22nd Jamádi. II. 13-H (24th August 634 A. D), at the age of 63.

[i] A Short Hist of the Saracens, by Amir Ali.

(k) Ch. 41 P. 4.

‘Umer bin Khettáb.

**23rd Jamádí. II, 13. H.—23 Zulhijj, 23. H.
=24th August. 634. A. D.—3 November. 644. A. D.**

CHAPTER LI.

‘UMER’S ACCESSION.

Anticipated—Did the Prophet also do the thinking—‘Alis’ act and thought.

1. Abú Biker’s succession was a forgone conclusion. The Theqífeh affairs and its antecedents had led Hobábi bin Munzer and Ali^m to foresee the succession.

Anticipated The Secretary had anticipated the name before the Caliph’s dictation,ⁿ the wag^o had guessed it before the contents of the testament were made public, the forces in distant Syria had scented^p it. The people knew that the Caliphate would go “this year”,^q in the words of the wag, to the man who had implanted it on the Caliph.

2. The Caliph, after having been at the helm of affairs for about a couple of years, had given the question of succession his “best thought”.^r Did not the Prophet, who had worked for his people for 23 years, do the thinking? Succession to the Prophet was declared elective which deprived ‘Alí of his claims on grounds of consanguinity and nomination. Hastv election at Theqífeh may seek justification on grounds of emergency but here, though he had a fortnight to consult public opinion, the Caliph contented himself with making a nomination.

3. And regarding the nomination, the holy Companions, respected leaders of public opinion, protested,^s the Syrian forces expressed mutinous sentiments.^t
‘Umer estimated The City ridiculed it.^u ‘Amr bin el ‘Aas, sub-

(l) Ch 36 P. 6 (m) Ch 40 P. 3 (n) Ch. 50 P. 1

(o) Ch. 50 P. 2 (p) Ch. 50 P. 4 (q) Ch. 50 P. 2

(r) *ibid* (s) Ch. 50 P. 3 (t) Ch. 50 P. 4 (u) Ch. 50 P. 2

sequently 'Umer's governor of Egypt, said, "Time was when, during the pre-Islamic days, my father wore silk and gold while Khettáb ('Umer's father), with a load of fuel on his head, went hawking it about. His son now is Caliph."

4. With the flower of Muslim manhood encamped and besieged, as it were, in the enemy country, the two greatest Empires of the day, the Byzantine and the Persian, in active hostility, the least disturbance at the head-quarters would mean utter ruination. The expeditionary forces would fly at each other's throat and the survivors would be captured or killed by the Persians and the Byzantines who would, then, march on to Arabia, first to punish Islam's infant State for transgressing the Imperial boundaries and then to swallow it down their capacious maw. 'Ali saw the grave danger and said: "The first one^w passed along his path but after him lowered the bucket of the Caliphate down into 'Umer's well. I wonder and wonder greatly that the deceased was offering to abdicate^x but, on death-bed, fixed it upon another. Verily, they are jointly sharing the udder of the she-camel of the Caliphate. Alas! he conferred the Caliphate on a short-tempered, stony man, whose words wounded deep and gory, whose very touch was unpleasant, whose words and deeds ran unparallel, whose temperament was fickle which made him stumble at every step and then confess that he had blundered. The man of such temperament is like the man on the back of an unbroken camel; if he draws in the nose-string, he is liable to tear its nose; if he does not draw in the nose-string he will himself tumble off

its back. By the Eternal Allah, he set the world in confusion. Every body, with or without capacity, became self-opinionated in matters, both spiritual and secular; public opinion became unstable, scepticism appeared on all sides on account of him. It pained me but I kept my patience."y

CHAPTER LII.

LOADS OF BOOTY AND CROPS OF PROBLEMS

War's vicious circle—and the Muslims—Problems of conquest—military, ethnic, political, cultural, social and administrative.—internal and external difficulties.

1. The new Caliph continued his predecessor's military policy. War moves in a vicious circle. You lead a punitive expedition against, what you think, a malicious frontier-town and subjugate it. The garrison escapes and, securing sympathy and reinforcement in the next town, howls at you vindictively. You march in pursuit, gain a fresh victory only to find yet another battle staring you in the face. On and on you march but peace like the ever-receding horizon becomes more and more inaccessible. This is particularly the case when you cross the frontier of a big empire. You may win a battle but not peace unless you swallow the whole empire. The moral result is more curious; it leads the invader into a false position. What may have been, on your part, a mere punitive expedition to punish a fool-hardy frontier-town degenerates into an imperialistic design of greedy land-grabbing. Your enemy, who was, perhaps, wrong at the frontier, feels wronged as you, town by town, penetrate deeper into his motherland. In the interior of his country he fights you in the name of patriotism, the dignity of national prestige and the honour of the motherland. You become an invader and he the defender of his homeland. He is the patriotic defender and you are the unholy transgressor.

It appears to have been the same with the Muslim forces in the Persian and Byzantine empires. The Empires could not brook the insult of an invasion, much

less look on placidly at the slicing away of the Imperial provinces. The Muslim forces, on the other hand, could not retire from their acquisitions.

Retreat for Muslims was thrice inexpedient. It was likely to invite and encourage a ruinous pursuit, create an impression that the previous Caliphate was more glorious than the present one and that the present Caliph was less adventurous than his victorious predecessor—an impression particularly undesirable at the threshold of the new rule. And lastly, the expeditionary forces consisted of men who entertained seditious² ideas towards the new Caliph. Return home of these grumblers was likely to prove upsetting; war, on the contrary, was likely to leave them little time for seditious thinking.

2. On marched, consequently, the Muslim army for ten continuous and strenuous years of hard battling and glorious fighting. Pushed forward by Muslim and glorious fighting. Pushed forward by conquests enthusiasm and lured on by never-failing victory. they overran the two greatest and senile empires, the Persian and the Byzantine. Towns, territories and provinces, one after the other, fell under the arms of young Arabia. In 'Irâq alone, the area comprised 20 thousand square miles. No less than one thousand and thirty-six towns of the Persian and Byzantine empires and that of Egypt came under Muslim sway, yielding an annual revenue of about a hundred million gold Dinârs, besides free grants to the military.

The war brought laurels to the generals, victorious name to the army and renown to the Caliph. The

(2) Ch. 50 P. 4, Ch. 51 P. 4

soldiery got rich booty^a—gold, silver, slaves, men-slaves and pretty girl-slaves. Out of the booty, one fifth came to the State-treasury to be distributed amongst the civil population. Crowns and coronets, choicest jewels and finest jewelry, royal furniture, flags and richest works

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- (a) At Qādessiyeh. in the booty was the coronet and belt of Rustum, the Persian general; the former was valued at a hundred thousand and the latter at 70 thousand gold Dinars. The soldier who captured the Imperial flag, the famous Derufsh i Kāwiyāni, sold it to his chief for 30 thousand which was, according to Ibn Kheldun, really worth a million Dinars. The booty captured at Medāyin was worth 300 millions, (Tabri), each soldier getting 12 thousands. In the Imperial palace was found a full-sized equestrian statue of gold inlaid with jewels, the rider, also, was gold, inlaid with precious stones of rare beauty. There was also a silver dromedary saddled in solid gold, on which sat a man, wrought in gold, holding in his hand an invaluable nose-string of diamonds and rubies.

Another precious find was the world-renowned carpet, the Behāristān (The Spring garden), 60 X 60 yards. It was all silk, interwoven with precious stones to form green grass, blooming trees, plants and flowers of the riotous Persian spring. In blasted autumn, the Persian emperors sat on the lustrous carpet, to enjoy their carouses. This carpet was distributed among the Muslims; 'Ali sold his piece, which, by no means, was of the best, for 20 thousand silver coins or, according to another version, gold Dinars. The State-share (one-fifth) loaded 900 camels. The Spring-carpet, the Imperial crown of Persia and other priceless curios were sent to the head-quarters, in addition. Similarly at Jelula, the booty was valued at 30 million Dinars; each one of the soldiers got 9 thousands Dinars, in cash and 9 horses. Nehāwend yielded 6 thousand Dinars to each one of the Muslim cavalrymen, while Merv brought as much as did Qādesiyeh.

of art from the two great and ancient empires came in camel-loads to the desert-home of Arab fighters.

3. The war brought glory, victory and the spoils of victory but it also did bring a confusing crop of difficult problems—military, political, legal, social and administrative problems—in a medley crowd. Lines of communication had become inordinately long, running, as they did, through the wide expanse of the empire, for instance, of the Khusros. How to keep these lines safe for the expeditionary forces? Hitherto Arabs had, all through their history, been an insular, clannish, and exclusive people. The Prophet is the first, in recorded history, to have linked the heterogenous tribes together to form a nation but he had left them autonomous. Thus had arisen a commonwealth of autonomous confederates linked together, invariably, by ties of Arab nationality and of common interests. The tribes, generally, had all adopted Islam as the national religion which further cemented the confederation. But the war, suddenly, changed the commonwealth into an empire, spread over extensive and far-flung territories, inhabited by an overwhelmingly large population of different races and diverse nationalities which had absolutely nothing in common with the Arabian conquerors. The victors and the vanquished differed from each other in race, language, thought, culture, etiquette, manners and customs. The victors, with nothing else to boast about, were proud of their language and called the vanquished

dumb (tongueless).^b The Persians refused to recognise the Arabs as anything but hunger-stricken devourers of insanitary diet and predatory nomads.^c How to secure esteem and good-will of the vanquished?

4. The vanquished were used to a system of government far more elaborate and systematized than the Arabs had ever had even the idea of. Their culture, civilization, institutions and habits, nay, the very modes of thought and action were

Clash of
cultures.

(b) 'Arab, etymologically, one who can speak. The Arabs call all non-Arabs, 'Ajem, tongueless. 'Ajem is the name particularly, applied by the Arabs to the Persians even to this day. Iraq was, for instance subdivided by the Arabs, into two parts. The Arabic speaking part was called 'Iraq-'Arab; the part inhabited by non-Arabs was called 'Iraq-'Ajem.

(c) The Prophet wrote a letter to the Persian Emperor (Ch. 20 P. 2) inviting him to the new faith. The Emperor thought it so presumptuous that he tore the letter to pieces, probably, thinking that nothing good could come from Arabia.

In 635 A. D, before the battle of Qádesiyyeh, when Muslim envoys visited the court of Yezid Gerd the Emperor rebuked them as lowly upstarts, and unceremoniously turned them out with baskets full of dust on their heads. Centuries later, the Persian author of the famous epic Sháh-námeh voiced his notional sentiments of disgust and contempt. Relating the envoys' visit, he makes the Emperor say:

"Fed on the she-camels' milk and the flesh of the porpoise Arabs have now the check,
To desire the throne of the Khusros. Fie, O fickle Time, Fie".

ز شیر شتر خوردن و سو سمار - عرب را بجائی رسید است کار
که تخت کیان را کنند آرزو - تقو بر نو اے مرغ گردان تقو

as different from their conquerors as the very climate and topography of their respective homelands. A system of law must needs be envolved to meet the new requirements, for the sword may conquer a country but can not govern a people.

The problems were difficult enough for any people to solve but they were particularly difficult for Arabia. It was new to organised politics and knew nothing about Imperialism and its methods. Arabia was a small country, sparsely populated and had, suddenly, found itself in possession of very large portions of the two great and populous empires. Its handful of men were called upon to administer a vast population used to a superior civilisation. It was a difficult, complicated and confusing task for an ignorant people, a people who had hardly emerged out of their dark ignorance to, suddenly, come in contact with an ancient and elaborate civilization. It was dangerous for the half-fed sons of the desert to live amidst the fertile prosperity of the vanquished. Conqueror on the battlefield, the unsophisticated^d son of the sands was likely to get confused and lost in the luxurious social systems of the senile empires. The rude soldier was apt to yield to the elaborate luxury of the degenerate plutocracy of the conquered lands. The army of

(d) In one of the battles a bedouin soldier was seen with a gold tray that had come to him as share of the booty, shouting about for any one who would give him a white tray for his yellow one. Another bedouin, having been at a Persian noble's table, asked a fellow-guest as to what the white discs were that they had been eating. He was told that they were wheaten loaves cooked in butter. Instead of salt a bedouin group cooked meat in comphor which they had found in the Palace at Medâiyen.

occupation, its attendant and dependant Arabs, had got to be kept in the conquered territory, as well as, kept from its effeminating influences.

5. All this was to be planned and performed while
Problems. Arabia had not ceased fighting and was
carrying on an apparently interminable war
in other parts of the empires.

(e) 'Umer mistook his generals, at Jerusalem, for Roman nobles because they were dressed in silk and gold. The Caliph rebuked them for the luxury. The Prophet's muezzin, Bilál, complained to him that the officers had for their meals fowls and wheaten flour. 'Umer saw in his army bucketfuls of wine—a totally prohibited drink, in Islam.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE STATESMAN BEHIND THE ARMY.

Militarism versus statesmanship—Prevailing unhappiness—Muslim conquest rendered a blessing by 'Ali,—Amelioration of the conditions of the conquered—'Ali, precursor of international jurisprudence.

1. A fiery band of men, aglow with enthusiasm, rushing, in a whirlwind of conquest, across the expanse of a great empire, is a picturesque sight. Man the Soldier looks at it in amazement and history records it as a freak of circumstances. The Macedonian Alexander, the Goths and the Huns overran the world, and so did Chengiz, Huláku, Timúr and Nádir. Picturesque and interesting sights these, but not for "the gods to see", for there is ravaging and ravishing, bloody welter and misery. Catching and great the dazzling flash of these military meteors but the weary mariner, "on life's solemn main", looks not to the meteor but to the dim, steady twinkle of the lodestar, for piloting the great ship of human weal, out of the storm of political and moral tyranny, into the happy haven of human liberty, equality and fraternity. Men may stare in awe, in amused amazement or amazed amusement at the general who, at the head of an invading army, rushes along in the glitter and clatter of arms. But humanity bows down, in grateful respect and reverence, to the statesmen who, in the wake of the invading army, walks with quiet laborious steps, mending the gaps, patching the rents, bandaging the broken bones, healing the wounds and comforting the heavy hearts of the ravaged country. Great, for his nation, may be a conquering general but, in the aggregate life of the human race, greater is the statesman who works to add his quota to

the totality of human happiness and advancement.

2. And "mankind had never in history been poorer in its stock of happiness and well-being" than at the time of this Arabian onrush. "Unutterable desolation brooded over the empires and kingdoms of the earth. In the West, as in the East, the masses were in utter misery, deprived of civil rights or political privileges they were ground down by laws which the powerful made to secure and augment their own interests. The Persian kings were gods and absolute masters of the people. The priests and the lords had monopolised all power, privileges and prosperity, crushing the peasantry under a lawless despotism. In sectarian turmoil, the licentiousness of its sovereigns, degeneration of its aristocracy, the over-weening pride of its priesthood the Persians only rivalled the Byzantines...In the Byzantine Empire, the clergy and the great magnates, courtisans and other nameless ministrants to the vices of the Cæsar and the proconsul were the happy possessors of wealth, power and influence. The people grovelled in the most abject misery...Wherever feudalism prevailed serfdom was the ordinary status of the peasantry. Serfs were slaves of the soil, to be bought and sold with the soil. They, their families and belongings belonged to the feudal lord. Serf and slave differed only in name, both had an iron collar round their necks as a badge of slavery. The slaves were no better than swine, fed like swine and housed worse than swine. With fettered feet and manacled hands, linked together in a single chain which led from collar to collar, the trader in human flesh led them from market to market. There were free-men who differed little from serfs; buying selling or inheriting property, they must pay a heavy fine to the

feudal lord. Grinding their cornor baking their bread, they must set aside a portion as the lord's share. If the lord's son or daughter married, they must cheerfully pay their contribution. But when the freeman's daughter married she must first submit to an infamous outrage and not even the bishop, the servant of Christ, when he happened to be the lord of the manor, would waive the atrocious privilege of barbarism."^f This was the debased, depraved and demoralised population that had been conquered by the Arabs. Weltering in their loathsome misery, the vanquished looked with contempt and disgust at their barbarian conquerors. Were they going to have the conqueror's heel superimposed on to the already too numerous engines of repression? Was Arab imperialism to add a new weapon to the armoury of indigenous imperialism? Was the grinding-mill of imperialism to have a heavier stone attached to it by the Arab barbarians? The vanquished looked askance at the rude conquerors. The administration was rendered doubly difficult because it was to be administered direct from distant Medineh, and the administrators lacked in the necessary experience.

3. But the spectacular onrush of the Arab hordes did not prove to be the scourge of the Goths and the Huns. It turned out to be a blessing. The Ali—a statesman Disciple of Mohammed, "the Blessing for the Universe," was there to represent his Master. "The age of speculation was soon to commence, its germs were contained in the positive precepts of the Master and even while he was working the scholarly Disciple was thinking. The Master had himself declared that whosoever desired to realise the spirit of his teachings must

(f) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali.

listen to the words of the Scholar....Who more able to grasp the meaning of the Master's words than 'Ali, the friend, the trusted Disciple, the devoted cousin and son? The gentle, calm teachings instilled in early life in the young mind bore their fruit...During his retirement Ali had devoted himself to the study of the Master's precepts by the light of reason".^g While the soldier fought and the politicians worked the war the scholarly Disciple was thinking and developing the theories "the germs of which were contained in the positive precepts of the Master". After the Prophet "Ali was the expositor of the Faith. In the Quran...legal doctrines were extremely few and adaptable to any circumstances or time and during the reigns of the Rashidín Caliphs were expounded chiefly by Ali and his disciple Ibn Abbas." 'Ali had forestalled the new problems by preparing the public to meet and tackle these. He lectured on branches of learning most suited to the wants of the infant commonwealth. He, with his pupil and cousin, Ibn 'Abbás^h "gave public lectures on poetry, grammar,ⁱ history and mathematics". To the fighting nation that sought glory on the field of

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- (g) The quotations on the page are from *The Spirit of Islam*, by Amir Ali.
- (h) The same learned author says, "upon their death, the men who had attended their lectures or listened to their judgments opened classes of jurisprudence on their own account. Fakihs or lawyers multiplied, they discussed religio-legal questions."
- (i) The influx of foreigners in Arabia and the desire to teach them al Qurán necessitated the evolving of Arabic grammar. Ali instructed Abul Aswed Doili to do it and set him on the line. "Speech", taught 'Ali, "either tells a name (noun) and action (verb) or something which is neither (herf-letter). You may build the superstructure in the like manner."

battle and immortalization in martyrdom said the Prophet's Disciple: "Eminence in science is the highest of honours", "the greatest ornament of man is erudition" and "he does not die who gives life to learning". "Under the advice of Ali, Omar founded and endowed schools and mosques in every part of the empire."^j

The expounder of the laws of the Prophet, 'Ali, gave the verdict, "the blood of the Zimmī^k is like the blood of the Muslim", and "many of the great administrative works undertaken in the time of Omer were due to his counsel....In the administration of the acquired countries, the improvement of the peasantry was particularly insisted upon. With that object Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Southern Persia were measured, field by field, and the assessment was fixed on a uniform basis. The record of this magnificent cadastral survey forms a veritable catalogue which, besides giving the area of the lands, describes in detail the quality of the soil, the nature of the produce, the character of the holdings and so forth. A network of canals was constructed in Babylonia and the embankments of the Tigris and Euphrates, culpably neglected by the Chosroes, were placed under the supervision of special officers....the stability of the empire and its material development depended upon the prosperity of the agricultural classes. To secure that, he ('Umer) forbade the sale of holdings and agricultural lands in the conquered countries. As a further protection against encroachment on the part of the Arabs he ordained that

(j) A Short History of the Saracens, by Amir Ali.

[k] Zimmīs—non-Muslim subjects of Islam. In lieu of compulsory military service to which Muslims were liable Zimmīs paid Jizīah in each.

no Saracen should acquire land from the native of the soil. The peasantry and land owners were thus doubly protected from eviction....Most of the grand undertakings initiated by Omer for the welfare of the people were due to his ('Ali's) counsel".¹

"From the first commencement of the Islamic preachings, Ali had extended the utmost consideration and friendship to the Persian converts. Selmán, the Persian, one of the most notable disciples of the Prophet, was long the associate and friend of Ali. After the battle of Qádesiyyeh,^m Ali used to devote his share of the prize-money to the redemption of the captives and repeatedly, by his counsel, induced Umer to lighten the burden of the subjects".ⁿ These and similar public acts and words, the sweet personal touch of 'Ali won the hearts of the vanquished, with the result that "the people everywhere received the Muslims as their liberators. Wherever any resistance was offered, it was by the priesthood and the aristocracy. The masses and the working classes, in general, who were under the ban of Zoroastrianism, ranged themselves with the conquerors.^o Secure from the tyranny of their former rulers, in complete enjoyment of civil and political rights conferred by the new rulers, they began to live a free life on terms of fraternal equality with the conquerors".

4. Their customs and institutions were left uninterfered with. They were governed according to their

(1) A Short History of the Saracens, by Amir Ali.

(m) Ch. 52. P. 2. Note (a)

(n) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali.

(o) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali.

International personal laws, for 'Ali had given the verdict, Jurisprudence "If I were to administer justice, I would do it among the Christians, Jews, Magians and Muslims, according to their respective laws".^p

(p) Nehj ul Belaghoh.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE ERA OF THE HIJREH.

Necessity for an era—possible starting-points for an era—'Ali suggests the Hijreh—the reasons for it.

1. Among the administrative problems was the problem of counting time. Arabia had a number of eras which caused a lot of confusion. The new connection with the lands of the Persians and Byzantines, each of which had its own era, added to the urgency of having a fixed standard of time throughout the Muslim empire.

A problem.

2. Islam had witnessed many a great event; the Prophet's birth, his Call to the Apostlate, his welcome entry into Medineh, the fall of Meccah and the Prophet's death were some of the epoch-making days. Each one of these could well start an era, and each one of these was discussed and considered.

Events.

3. Worldly victory is transitory and mundane glory a shadow. Events, howsoever important for contemporaries, are mere incidents for after-generations. Various suggestions based on the then 'great events' were made but 'Ali, the Disciple of the Prophet, suggested differently.

and their value.

4. Suffering for Truth, sacrifice for the cause of human uplift and in the performance of duty towards God and Man is really 'great', irrespective of success or failure of one's efforts. Jesus was a failure in his life. But Jesus is great in his failure. Mohammed's efforts were crowned with success. The success, however, is an accident and not the essence of his Mission. 'Ali saw the spirit of the Master's Mission.

'Ali's idea.

and suggested the Flight, the Hijreh, to be commemorated in the era of Mohammed's people.

Not the victorious prince but the suffering outcast, the man persecuted for his convictions deserved to be esteemed and venerated. The Muslim soldier attacking, killing or pursuing the enemy; the politician scheming, intriguing or devising; the statesman building, designing or planning; the man thinking, acting or achieving was always to remember that the Prophet worked for humanity and preferred to suffer in the service of mankind. Let his followers walk in the footsteps of the Master and never in the footsteps of the Master's persecutors.

In the midst of the din and noise of war it was a warning to the Muslim soldiery in the flush of victory, it was the cry of a feeling heart—like unto the cry of John, the Baptist—calling mankind back to the Kingdom of Heaven. It was Mercy's pleading against the transgression of the laws of God. It was 'Ali's appeal to the Muslims lest they should ever be less like persecuted Mohammed and more like Mohammed's unjust persecutors.

'Ali's great suggestion was accepted and the era of the Hijreh promulgated in the lands of the Religion of Peace—Islam.

CHAPTER LV. THE FIRST CITIZEN OF THE EMPIRE.

Influx of booty and tribute—establishment of a chancery department—a commission for preparing the Chancery register—Commissioners place 'Ali's name at the top of the register—what 'Umer sought to evade.

1. The new conquests brought large booty in which one-fifth was the share of the State. Booty had come to be a, more or less, regular source of the State-revenue. Expansion of the empire brought, every year, larger and larger amounts of tribute from the dependencies. The central treasury alone disbursed 300 millions, annually, in grants and pensions to the City;^a the provincial treasuries disbursed separately. It was high time to reorganise the simpler machinery that already existed. In the 14th year of the Hijreh a chancery department was established and a commission appointed to prepare a register containing, in order of merit, the names of all the payees. As this involved questions of precedence, three famous genealogical experts, namely, Mekhzúmeḥ bin Naufel, Jubeir bin Mutem and 'Aqil bin Abú Tálíb were entrusted with the complicated task. They laboriously prepared the register. "At the top were the names of the Beni Háshim, then came the late Caliph Abú Biker's family and so on, in descending order".^r The register was submitted to the Caliph who so amended it as to "begin with the name of 'Abbás, the Prophet's uncle".^s

2. The Prophet was a Háshimite and the commissioners, in justice to the value of the family's service

(q) Ya'qúbí (r) Ibn Kheldún (s) Ibid.

the amendment. to the cause of Islam and in compliance with public opinion recognised his family's right to precedence. The Caliph agreed to this but ordered an amendment—the substitution of the name of 'Abbás for the one that the commissioners had placed at the top. History discreetly omits to mention the name that originally stood at the top, but it is evident that 'Abbás was not that name. The commissioners being genealogical experts—a branch of knowledge the Arabs were particularly well-versed in—knew full well the order of nobility, the nobility of birth and of merit. One of the commissioners, 'Aqil bin Abú Tálib, was himself a Háshimite. He knew and the others agreeing with his knowledge had placed at the top the name which the Caliph wanted to have removed. On a former occasion, too, 'Abbás was the dark horse that was sought to be set in competition^t against 'Alí, when at the suggestion of the Machiavellian Mughیره bin Shobeh, the Caliph and his predecessor had tried to offer him a hereditary pension. 'Abbás, then, had proved a vicious horse.^u This time, however, the matter rested entirely in the hand of the quill-driver.

3. 'Abbás had admitted 'Alí's superiority and had offered to pay him allegiance.^v 'Alí was the Prophet's ^{and} first cousin and son-inlaw. For proclaiming ^{the meaning} the Declaration of Discharge the Prophet had pronounced 'Alí to be his best relative.^w As against the Nejrán Christians, the Prophet had marshalled 'Alí as his "self" and 'Alí's children as his own.^x 'Alí and his family was and has ever since, universally, been admitt-

(t) Ch. 29. P. 4. (u) Ch. 39, P. 6 (v) Ch. 34, P. 4

(w) Ch. 24. P. 4 (x) Ch. 25. PP. 1-2.

ed to be the head of the Hāshimites. It is more than clear, therefore, that the chancery commissioners had put at the top of the register 'Ali's name which was ordered to be replaced by that of 'Abbās. The question of 'Ali's precedence had cropped up unexpectedly and in the most unlikely quarters. The name topping the register, would be a recognition of 'Ali's paramountcy in all its implications. In the State archives, written in black and white, it would be an admission leading to political complications, both immediate and prospective. The commissioners owed their appointment to the Caliph and obeying the Caliph's command they removed the (historically) unmentioned name of 'Ali to give the top place to the name of 'Abbās, even as 'Ali's name had been hushed down at Theqifeh and suppressed in the provinces. In the heart of the people, however, 'Ali was still the top-most man in Islam.

4. The chancery commissioners had scratched 'Ali's name but after declaring that of all men who had claims upon the grateful consideration of the Nation 'Ali was the foremost, State-policy notwithstanding. Historians have suppressed his name but only to proclaim to the world that 'Ali was the 'first citizen' of the Realm of Islam.

The effects

CHAPTER LVI

THE HONEST AND WISE ADVISOR.

Ali advises the Caliph on political expediency and military strategy of Qádessiyyeh, Neháwend—conditions of Arab loyalty to the Caliph—'Uthmán misunderstands Ali's point of view—Ali sets him right and advises the Caliph to proceed to Jerusalem, sign the treaty and end the war—Ali officiates for the Caliph—its significance—Ali, a political suspect and internee—Ali sketches the Caliph,

1. "Since the death of the Prophet Ali, though he had never failed to attend the councils of State, had always maintained a dignified reserve and a noble independence of character. In his retirement he had chiefly devoted himself to study and the peaceable occupation of domestic life...With his usual magnanimity and devotion to the Faith, scrupulously anxious to avoid the least discord among the disciples of the Master...he had never refrained from giving to the first two Caliphs his help and advice in the governance of the Commonwealth and they, on their side, had always deferred to his counsel and his exposition of the Master's teachings."y

2. The humiliation of repeated defeats roused the disrupted Persians to a sense of patriotism. Shelving their intrigues and ambitions they rallied round the throne and, in 15. H (=635 A. D), concentrated at Qádessiyyeh^z a multitudinous army to hurl the Arab barbarians across the Imperial frontiers. Against these extensive preparations, and in view of the Muslim's small number, the Caliph prepared to lead his

(y) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali

(z) Ch. 52 P. 2. n (a)

forces personally. Men hailed the news but 'Alī said, "With Allah rests the defence of Islam's frontiers and the protection of Muslim prestige. The Lord gave Muslims victory when their numbers were fewer and ways to victory scantier. The Lord kept them from defeat when defeat appeared inevitable. The Lord is living and Eternal. Should you march, in person, against the enemy and get worsted, the Muslims shall be pursued to the end of their home-lands and have no rallying point. Let them, therefore, march under some experienced captain and give him hardy, perseverant and loyal soldiers. If victory comes, that is your desire; if the result is otherwise, you will be their succour and their rallying-centre".^a The Caliph and his council agreed with the advice and acted accordingly.

3. On another occasion, in 21 H (642-A. D) the governor at Kúfeh reporting that the Kisrá, Yezd Gerd, had collected an army of 150 thousand strong
 Military to strike a decisive and last blow for his throne, 'Umer thought of going, in person, to Neháwend.^b 'Uthmán bin 'Effán (afterwards the third Caliph) advised that forces from Syria, Yemen and Besreh should be ordered to join the Caliph and his Hijáz forces at Kúfeh. The council agreed. The Caliph looked to 'Alī who had not spoken yet. 'Alī advised:

"Victory or defeat does not depend, entirely, on numbers. Islam is a Divine Principle; God means it to be paramount. The Lord of Hosts has always been the succour of Muslims. Their prestige is great and the sunshine of their name as lustrous as it ought to be. We fully believe in the Divine promise of Islam's pramountcy

and He is unfailing in His promise of assisting us with His hosts. In Islam, the leader is the thread that keeps together the pearls in the pearl-necklace. Without the thread the pearls will scatter, perhaps, never to get together again. Arabs may be fewer in number, but Islam's prestige shows them mighty. Their solidarity will insure their victory. Now, you be unto them as the axle is to the mill and work the mill with the hands of the hosts of Arabia ; place them under the lead of some one other than yourself and warm them up with the warmth of war. If you leave Medineh, the surrounding tribes shall rise up all around ; in that case the protection of the families of the expeditionary forces shall have prior claim on your attention, to the prejudice of your present objective. Moreover, when the Persians see you, tomorrow, in the field, they shall say among themselves, 'here is the Arab chief; have done with him and all is over'. Surely, this will tempt them to fight hard and tough; they shall be over-greedy to capture you. You call the Persians *aggressors*? Then know that God hates aggression more than you do; and the Almighty has power to destroy whatever He hates. You say that the invader is more numerous and multitudinous; just remember that we, the Companions, never were numerous when we fought under the Prophet. We fought the enemy, always, relying on the help and assistance of the Lord.

4. "Reducing your strength in Syria will invite the Byzantines to undo what the Muslims have achieved there. Denuding Yemen of its garrison will expose it to the Abyssinians. Weakening the Hijaz forces will create disturbance at home. One third of the Kufeh and Basreh contingents may be summoned, a third may serve as reserves but the rest must be

Strategical

maintained at the outposts",^c Orders were issued accordingly.

5. Advice, to restrain the head of the State from risking his life in battle, was always given from the point of view of strategy and military policy but never for instilling in the Caliph any spirit of grandiose or false self-magnification as 'Uthmán bin 'Effán, misunderstanding 'Alí's motive, once tried to do. During the siege of Jerusalem, in 16 H (637 A. D), the citizens offered to surrender if the Caliph, personally, came over to sign the treaty. Abú 'Obeideh, the General, reported accordingly. 'Utmán bin 'Effán opined that the exhausted city that had expressed its weakness was sure to surrender in a short while and that they need not be accorded the unusual honour of the Caliph's personal attendance. 'Alí, however, thinking it mere vain-gloriousness, advised the Caliph to go and end all unnecessary bloodshed and worry. The council approved of 'Alí's merciful suggestion. The Caliph went, signed the treaty of peace and saved the belligerents the agony of war.

6. Tabri says that 'Alí officiated during the Caliph's absence to the holy city and again, in 18. H. (=639 A. D.), when the Caliph went out to visit Syria in connection with the plague that ravaged that province as well as Egypt and 'Iráq.

Only those who have some knowledge of the intrigues in the Courts of Eastern autocracies or in the Western Courts during the Middle Ages, can know and appreciate the significance of 'Alí being left in charge of the absent ruler's powers.

(c) Nehj ul Belágheh.

Truly did 'Umer say, and say so often, "but for 'Ali 'Umer would be a dead man", for 'Ali had sincerely and effectively solved for him many a difficult and confusing problem. Duly was the Caliph grateful to 'Ali.

7. But, oh, the exigencies of politics. In spite of all this sincere service to the State 'Ali was, to the Caliph, nothing but a political suspect and an internee who could not step beyond the boundaries of the Capital. "Umer did not die till the Qureish were sore on account of him, for he had interned them in Medineh. He used to say to them. 'I am afraid of your going about among the people', Any of them requesting him for permission to join the army was told, 'Enough of fighting you have done under the Prophet. Now, instead of fighting, it is better that you do not see the world and that the world should not see you'. This internment was peculiar to the Qureish Muhájirs and did not extend to the Qureish in Meccah.^d

This receives corroboration from the fact that 'Ali is never seen out of the Capital during this as well as the previous and the next Caliphate.

Said 'Ali, of 'Umer:

8. His "words wounded deep and gory, his very touch was unpleasant; his words and deeds ran unparallel, his temperament was defective which made him stumble at every step and then confess that he had blundered. The man of such temperament is like the man on the back of an unbroken camel, if he draws in the nose-string, he is liable to tear its nose, if he does not draw in the nose-string he

An estimate.

(d) Ibn Athir. See also Ch. 49 P. 15

will himself tumble off its back. Every body, with or without capacity, became self-opinionated in matters both spiritual and secular; public opinion became unstable, scepticism appeared on all sides on account of him. It pained me but I kept my patience".^e

CHAPTER LVII

'UMER SPEAKS THE NATION'S MIND.

'Umer explains the disposition of the Caliphate—The Caliph's dialogues with 'Abbás—its historical Importance.

1. Generously, honestly and sincerely did 'Alí, always, act towards the Caliph and tender his advice whenever it was wanted. Scrupulously had 'Alí, 'Umer and the Nation he avoided everything that was likely to cause disturbance or discord. 'Alí was gold that could not help shining and catching the world's eye. This made interested parties nervous. 'Alí had always retained a 'dignified reserve' towards the question of the Caliphate and yet his 'seeing the world or the world seeing him' or his friends was interdicted and held undesirable. Time and again, the Caliph would refer to the question of the Caliphate in the presence of 'Alí's friends. He was always apologetic and tried to impress on the mind of 'Alí's friends the hopelessness of their chief's position. Tabrí has preserved two invaluable dialogues which show the nature of the causes which stood between the Hášimites and the Caliphate as also the Hášimites' attitude towards the question. It would be an interesting study to see, in the light of history, the extent to which 'Umer rightly spoke the nation's mind or to identify the group or groups of men spoken of by him as the "Nation."

2. The first dialogue was occasioned thus. A poet recited a eulogium in honour of the Caliph who said that the verses best fitted the Hášimites. 'Jealousy Abdullah bin 'Abbás remarked, "you have understood it right". Then followed the dialogue between 'Umer and Ibn 'Abbás, one of the greatest *savants* of the Muslim

world and the "Ocean of Learning" among the Companions.

'Umer, "Why is it, 'Abdullah, that 'Alí does not mix with us. You are the son of the Prophet's uncle; do you know the reason why the '*Nation*' did not support you (the Háshimites)?"

'Abdullah, "I can not say".

'Umer, "They did not like to see the Apostolate and the Caliphate united in the same family lest it should lord it over others. The *Qureish*, therefore, took the matter in their own hands and constituted their own Caliph. The Qureish are right and did the right thing".

'Abdullah, "Commander of the Faithful! The Qureish would be right and go unquestioned had they taken it in their hands under God's command. But as regards the Qureish doing it because they *disliked* the combination of the Apostolate and the Caliphate in the same family I have simply to quote the Quránic verse^f concerning a people in antiquity who, disliking a Divine dispensation acted against it, viz 'and as for those who disbelieve, for them is destruction, (and He has made their deeds ineffective). Because they *disliked* what Allah revealed, so He rendered their deeds null and void."

3. The second dialogue runs thus:

'Umer, "Abdullah! reports attribute certain things to you, I did not verify the information lest its truth should lower you in my estimation.

Injustice

'Abdullah, "Commander of the Faithful. What is it? If true, it ought, surely, to lower me in your estimation; if untrue, I shall clear my position".

'Umer, "I am informed that in the matter of the Caliphate you hold that your family's deprivation was due to mutiny, jealousy and injustice on our part".

'Abdullah, "Regarding 'injustice', I need not expatiate on what is common knowledge now, both for the learned and the ignorant. Concerning '*jealousy*'. Well, Adam was jealousy's victim and we are but Adam's children and are heir to the ancestral fate..."

'Umer, "Alas! O 'Abdullah!! the Háshimite heart is nothing but jealousy".

'Abdullah, "Do not say so, O chief; the Prophet's was a Háshimite heart".

'Umer, "Avaunt".

'Abdullah, "Very well".

'Umer, "Wait, O 'Abdullah- By Allah, I respect your rights and desire your pleasure".

'Abdullah, "Surely, O chief, *we* have rights on you as we have rights on every other Believer. Whoever respects these rights shall be the gainer, and whoever injures these shall be the loser".

CHAPTER LVIII

'UMER PROVIDES FOR SUCCESSION.

The Caliph's assassination—the Caliph wants to leave the Caliphate to Abú 'Obeideh—'Aiyshah urges him not to leave the succession unprovided for—the Caliph constitutes a committee to select one of themselves for the Caliphate—and lays down the procedure of the committee—'Ali explains the effect of the committee—'Abbás on the intention of the committee and its constitution—the Caliph's decease.

8. 'Umer's eventful life and reign were brought to a violent close by the dagger of a Zoroastrian slave named Firoz, Abú Lúlú. "Religion may have a windmill. had some share in prompting this act of violence—perhaps revenge for the ruin brought upon his country,"^g but personal spite seems to have been the immediate motive. The slave complained to the Caliph against the extortionate demands of his master, Mughireh bin Sho'beh. To the Caliph's query the slave disclosed that he was well up in three arts and handicrafts and was an expert in constructing windmills. The Caliph, therefore, decided against him. The Caliph inquiring if he would construct him a good mill the slave replied, 'I will construct you a windmill that shall grind till the Day of Judgment'. Finding an opportunity he stabbed the Caliph.

2. The Caliph lingered on for 3 days. Asked to *nominate* a successor he said, he would have done it had Abú 'Obeideh^h bin Jerráh been alive to be the *Nomination* Caliph.ⁱ The Prophet's wife 'Aiyshah implored him not to leave his succession *unsettled*.^j

(g). The Successors of Mohomet, by W. Irving.

(h). Ch. 36. PP. 15. Ch. 39. P. 2, Ch. 34. P. 1, Ch. 49. P. 11

(i). Tabrí and Kitáb al Imámt vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibeh.

(j). Ibid. Ibn Athir.

3. Another advising him to nominate his son received the reply, "'Umer's family has had enough in 'Umer and needs no more'".^k "I have *thought* *great and deep* regarding the question of appointing a successor who (pointing to 'Alí) shall lead you *rightly* and is the *best* of you. But destiny rules the affairs of men—chose one of the six, namely, 'Alí, 'Uthmán bin 'Effán, 'Abdur Rehmán bin 'Auf, Sa'd bin Abú Waqqás, Zubeir bin el 'Awám and Telheh bin 'Obeidulleh".^l

4. Next day, the Caliph constituted these six into a committee to select one of themselves for the Caliphate. the Scheme of Succession appointed for them a meeting-place and commissioned Abú Telheh to guard it with 50 men and see that they came to a decision within 3 days of his (the Caliph's) death. Miqdád bin Aswed was commissioned to supervise the work and see that it concluded within the specified time. The selection was to be by a majority of votes. In case of a tie, the Caliph's son 'Abdulleh was to be the umpire. He was to vote on the side of 'Abdur Rehmán. Should the committee not like to co-opt him 'Abdur Rehmán was to have the casting vote. To render the committee's^m decision final and

(k) Tabrí. Ibn Athír. Rauza tul Ahabáb and Ibn Khledún.

(l) Ibn Athír and Tabrí.

(m) 'Umer is reported to have given a character-sketch of each one of the members of the committee. He said, "You O Sa'd are a stiff, stern and war-like man. You, O 'Abdur Rehmán, are the Pharaoh of this nation. You, O Zubeir, are a Muslim in quiet moments but a heathen in excitement and ambition. You, O Telheh, are proud and supercilious—given the Caliphate you are sure to put the signet-ring of the office on your wife's finger. You, O Uthman, are clannish and inordinately fond of your kinsmen. You, O 'Alí, greatly desire the Caliphate and are undoubtedly best fitted for the office—given the Caliphate, you will establish truth and carry men straight on the right path. Kitáb ul Imámet vas Siyáset, by Ibn Quteibhh. also see Ch. 71. P. 2.

conclusive an effective procedure was laid down, on the following day: Five of the committee agreeing on one side, the dissentient sixth was to be put to death; four agreeing together, the two dissentients were to be beheaded and so also the 3 dissentients from 'Abdur Rehmán's party that was in possession of his casting vote.ⁿ

5. Hearing of the committee and its constitution 'Ali remarked to 'Abbás, "the Caliphate is again off from us". Asked to explain himself he said, 'Ali's reading "Abdulleh is 'Uthmán's son-in-law, 'Abdur Rehmán is 'Uthmán's brother-in-law, Sa'd is 'Abdur Rehmán's cousin. They all vote together. Telheh and Zubeir are no use even if they vote with us because, under the circumstances, 'Abdur Rehmán's is to be considered the majority party".^o

6. As 'Umer sent for 'Ali, 'Abbás advised the latter against complying with the summons because "Umer does not give us the Caliphate. By Allah, this 'Abbas speaks time it is going to one whom to befriend is mere waste of one's goodness. We shall be able to say that the Hāshimites were not on the committee. The public is *likely to take the matter in its own hands*". But consistently with his policy 'Ali went to the Caliph; he did not like to be "a disturbing factor".^p

7. As the people talked and discussed the committee and its constitution or speculated upon its upshot, the

(n). Tabrí.

(o). Tabrí, Ibn Athír, Abul Fida, Rauza tus Sefá, Rauza tul Abbáb.

(p). Ibid. also. Ch. 59, P. 9.

The Caliph old Caliph lay preparing to join the Infinite. Beloved child of fortune, 'Umer came of the tribe of the Bení 'Adí which had been expelled from Meccah by the Bení 'Abd ush Shams to the valley of Zejnán (25 miles from Meccah). There, clad in a long shirt of coarse camel-wool, he grazed the camels of a rustic father who beat him mercilessly whenever he sat down to rest his tired youthful limbs. The end of the hot tiresome day did not end his day's labour, for in the evening he had to collect fuel in the forest which the father and son brought on their heads to hawk in the town.^q At 18, a grazier to Welid bin Mughíreh Mekhzúmi and later a broker, he adopted Islam at 27 and rose to be the Commander of the Faithful. For ten years he held in his hand one of the most potent sceptres of the world wherein he had made himself known so widely. Now that he was at the world's exit he charged his son to pay off his debts to the State-treasury which amounted to 86,000 Dirhems, "from his estate, or if necessary, to request his clan and then the Qureish to make good the deficiency."^r

Ripe of age, achievement and fame, 'Umer, at 63, awaited death which reached him on the 26th of Zu'l Hijja, 23. H. (November 3, 644 A. D.).

(q). *ibid.*

(r). Tabri, Seyúti, *Sehíh Bukhári*.

No such appeal seems to have been made or deemed necessary, for the Caliph had left a vast estate. One of his heirs sold a petty share for a hundred thousand Dirhems. Within a week of the opening of the inheritance one of his houses was sold, out of the sale-proceeds of which the whole debt was liquidated (*Fateh ul Bari*, a translation of *Sehíh Bukhári*, Seyúti).

CHAPTER LIX.

UMMEYYADE INTRIGUE

The Committee a mistake—the Ummeyyade mind—'Abdur Rehman seeks to be the sole arbiter—'Uthman welcomes but 'Ali expresses his suspicion about the arbitration—A breezy man—the Prophet's Companions advise the arbitor to appoint 'Ali—the Ummeyyades demand the elevation of 'Uthman—'Abdur Rehman makes up his mind and goes through the farce of offering the Caliphate to 'Ali on impossible conditions—'Ali rejects and 'Uthman accepts them and gets the Caliphate—'Ali on the arbitration—the Ummeyyade's threats—'Ali details his claims—the holy Companions on the arbitration—tribalism again—explains his attitude—the arbitrator's conditions, the beginning of anthropotary in Islam—'Ali gives a lesson to Muslims at the cost of a crown—Modern Islam's awakening to 'Ali's great lesson—'Ali explains his attitude to 'Abbás.

1. The forming of the committee was a "mistake which paved the way to Ommeyade intrigue. The Board, Ommeyades now formed a strong party in a mistake Medina; they had long been the rivals of the Hashemides, the family of the Prophet, and hated them fiercely; they had pursued Mohammad with bitter ferocity and it was only after the fall of Mecca that they had adopted Islam from motives of self-interest. They had seen in the progress of Islam the means of personal aggrandisement. Their hatred of the simple austere companions of the Prophet who ruled over Islam was burning and implacable. They viewed with ill-concealed jealousy the old Muslims who formed the council of State and held the chief offices of Government. The pure and simple lives of these saints were a standing reproach to them for their laxity and selfishness, and they easily found allies among the chiefs of the Bedouin tribes attached to them by kinship. By their intrigues

they succeeded in keeping Ali out of the Caliphate.”^s

2. The committee sat at the appointed place, guarded by Abú Telheh and his fifty men. Mughireh bin Sho'beh and 'Amr bin el 'Aas, to show off their importance, came and sat at the door but were removed by Abú Telheh. “Selfish ambition” rendered the committee's work more and more complicated.^t At one stage of the elongated discussion 'Abdur Rehman offered to waive his right to selection if the others constituted him arbitrator. 'Uthman was “the first” to welcome the idea, the others, with the exception of 'Ali, followed suit. To 'Abdur Rehman's specific inquiry 'Ali said, “I can consent to it only if you promise, first, that you will be *just*, will not pursue your *breezy ambition*, neither look to *kinship*, be a *partisan*, nor follow *selfish desires* and *self-seeking policy* and promise also that you will not swerve from the path of justice by some one's *advice* or fear of *reproach*”.^u He promised and proceeded to narrow down the circle of claims. Telheh withdrew in 'Uthman's favour, Zubeir in 'Ali's and Sa'd entrusted his vote to 'Abdur Rehman. The issue, thus, narrowed down between 'Ali and 'Uthman.

3. The civil and military population of the Metropolis, the provincial aristocracy and gentry that had come to the City of the Prophet from their Meccan Pilgrimage, the high and the low, looked at the man who could place the world's most powerful sceptre in whichever hand he pleased. He walked about in the streets and lanes of the City the most observed man. He visited, talked, discussed and was

(s) The Successors of Mohomet, by W. Irving.

(t) Tabri (u) Ibn Kheldun

visited. talked to and discussed with, as he had never before been in his life. It was enough to make a fellow a Pharaoh^v if he was not already one. No wonder that in power's intoxication he let pass two days without coming to a decision. 'Umer was dead, on troubled waters of foreign war the ship of the Islamic State had been without a pilot for the last two days, and the committee and its arbitrator were dilly-dallying and beating about the bush in the most irresponsible manner. The Pharaoh, who was enjoying the possession of power and liked to perpetuate it, was given a rude shaking by Abú Telheh who insisted on the decision being declared that very day which was the last for the purpose.^w

With the Prophet's turban on his head, the Prophet's sword in his hand the Pharaoh ascended to the top of the Prophet's pulpit.^x The congregation of Islam squatted around him on the floor of the Prophet's mosque. In this self-magnification and sacrosanctity he invited the congregation to offer their suggestions on the point.

4. 'Ammár bin Yásir, the holy Companion, whom the Master "loved because Allah comanded him to do Muslims or so", advised him to nominate 'Alí, saying the Qureish that "that would avoid disunity among *Muslims*". Miqdád bin Aswed, another holy Companion,

(v) Ch. 58. P. 4. n (m)

(w) Tabri. (x) The pulpit consist of 4 steps. The Prophet used to sit at the top. Abú Biker. out of respect for the Master, used to sit a step lower; 'Umer keeping the two highest steps unoccupied, in memory of the Master and the first Caliph, used to sit on the third step.

supported 'Ammár. 'Abdullehy bin Sa'd bin Abú Surrah stood up to advise, "if you do not want to see the *Qureish* disrupted elevate 'Uthmán to the Caliphate". 'Abdulleh bin Rabí, another bird of the same feather, supported him and smiled, at the assemblage, a smile of sinister satisfaction. The holy 'Ammár was scandalised at the audacity of the last speaker and said, "You apostate, when did you get the right of addressing a Muslim congregation? Did you ever speak here before now"? Sa'd bin Abú Weqqás² urged upon the arbitorator the desirability of hastening to the conclusion before it resulted in a disturbance. 'Abdur Rehmán declared, "I have already fixed upon a Caliph in my mind".^a

5. Having thus made up his mind 'Abdur Rehmán took 'Alí aside, confided to him, "Kinship with the ^{The Pharaoh's} Prophet, peerless services in the cause of mind and 'Alí Islam, coupled with the fact of your being the first Muslim, render you unequalled in your fitness for the Caliphate.^b Then taking 'Alí's hand in his own he asked him in public, "if appointed Caliph, do you consent to act in accordance with the Book and the Prophet and to follow the precedents of Abú Biker and 'Umer."^c "The Caliphate was offered to the son of Abu Talib but Omeyyade intrigue had annexed to the proposal a

(y) A son of 'Uthmán's sister. Being the Prophet's scribe for recording the Quranic revelations, he tried to tamper with the scriptural words so as to denaturalise their meaning. He was detected and banished. He, then, relapsed into heathenism. At the fall of Meccah, a general amnesty was granted but 'Abdulleh's life was spared only at 'Uthmán's intercession.

(z) P. 2. *supra*.

(a) Tabri and Rauza-tus-Safá. (b) Ibn Kheldún. (c) Tabri

condition which they knew Ali would not accept. He was requested to govern not only in accordance with the laws and precedents of the Prophet but also with those established by his two predecessors. With characteristic independence Ali refused to allow his judgment to be so fettered".^d "Ali replied that he would govern according to the Koran and the authentic traditions but would in all other respects act according to his own judgment, without reference to the example of the Seniors. This reply not being satisfactory to the council, they made the same proposal to Uthman bin Affan who assented to all the conditions".^e

6. 'Abdur Rehman forthwith rendered allegiance to 'Utman, the new Caliph. 'Ali said to the Pharaoh, and the People "This was all a mere show.^f Your object is merely to gain popularity.^g This is not the first day of your injustice and transgression. By Allah, you have given it to 'Uthman that it may revert to you, but the Lord's manifestations are variant". "Bring not yourself under a cloud", the Pharaoh said in terrific insinuation and reference to the penalty of death^h provided for the dissentient, "and pave not your way to death, O Ali". "Patience is best and Allah is our succour as against you", was 'Ali's rejoinder.ⁱ Then fearlessly stood up 'Ali to interrogate the congregation,

7. "People! on your oath, speak the truth, did not the Prophet say of me,

(d) The Spirit of Islam, by Amir Ali,

(e) The Successors of Mahamet, by W. Irving. (f) Abdul Fida

(g) Rauza tus Sefâ, (h) Ch. 56 P. 4. (i) Tabri, Ibn Athir and Abdul Fida

'Ali and the People. 'you are my brother in this world and the Hereafter'.

'Of whomsoever I am the Master 'Ali is his Master'.

'You are to me as Aaron was to Moses except that there is no prophet after me'

'I am the city of of knowledge and 'Ali is its gate.

'None' can perform (Apostolic) duties except myself or one who is from my family'.

Do you remember the perilous predicaments when each one of the Companions deserted the Master and I was the solitary servant who stuck to him.

Am I not the first who Believed the Master.

Is it not a fact that the Master put me in command over you and I was never subordinated to any one of the Muslims?"

To question after question, as it fell from 'Ali's righteous lips, the congregation groaned assent. Finding it difficult to insinuate any more threats the Pharaoh changed his tactics and said, "All that you say is right, but as the majority is with 'Uthmán, you too, O 'Ali, should pay him homage"^j "Your merits, deserts and excellence are truly beyond question. All agree that your qualifications are quite as you say, but now that the *many* have paid homage to 'Uthmán it is up to your high sense of civic duty and it is expected of you to agree with the *democracy of Islam*. I have every hope that you will accede to my request'^k

8. In disgust, the holy Companion, Miqdád, cried out to 'Abdur Rehmán, "By Allah, you have deprived

(j) Rauza tul Ahbab, (k) Tabri

The Companions and 'Alī 'Alī of his rights although *he is the man who ought to be dealt with justly and squarely*".

'Abdur Rehman. "I have tried my best but I am helpless, for the *Muslims* do not want him".

Miqdad. "It is a wonder that the *Qureish* do not want such a man; it is unbelievable. In knowledge and action he is by far the best man".

'Abdur Rahman. "Take care, O Miqdád, lest you get entangled in trouble".^l

Miqdad. "You people have formed a *clique* and are in conspiracy with one another".^m

9. Replying to 'Abdur Rehman, 'Alī said, "You know full well that I am best-fitted for conducting the affairs of the Caliphate but your *selfishness* and *worldly motives* perversely lead you against your conscience. By Allah, I shall accept it on grounds of expediency. I know that in my acquiescence is the *peace and stability* of Islam. Your act is unjust and tyrannous to me but my personal loss does not affect the public".ⁿ 'Alī's very words have been preserved by a scholarly descendant of his, "You know full well that I am better entitled to your homage and deserve the Caliphate more than does my rival. But I will acquiesce in it *so long as affairs of Islam remain unharmed* and tyranny and oppression do not become a *public scandal*, even though my personal rights should be subjected to injustice. I so acquiesce and accept in the hope of Divine recognition and recompense. May my act bring me nearer God. I shun rule for the very reasons which

(l) Abul Fida, *Heyat ul Qulub*. (m) Mas'udi, *Ibn Athir*.

(n) *Rauza tus Sefa, Hebb us Siyyar*.

make you covet it".^o Then in company with the Hâshimites 'Alî left the congregation.

10. 'Alî valued human intellect, the best of God's gifts, too well to barter it away for a crown, even though 'Uthmân's it be of the greatest empire of the day. He effect renounced the crown to teach the followers of Islam that mere man, however highly placed, is never big enough to bind man's intellect. 'Uthmân's acceptance of the terms which 'Alî repudiated may well be taken as the origin, in Islam, of what is, in essence, nothing different from man-worship. Jurists have been canonised and idolised. Their text-books are held infallible and thinking independently of what to say of going against, whose centuries-old dicta is deemed sinful. The flexible laws of the Qurân have, thus, become stereotyped, petrified and look antiquated. Idolatry has been replaced, in Islam, by man-warship and worship of the *Past*. Both the good and the bad of early Islam has, thus, become a curse of the later-day Muslims.

11. 'Alî retained his judgment and renounced the crown, 'Uthmân chose otherwise. The Muslims acclaimed the crown and ignored the man of judgment, alî's warning and ignored, too, the warning he gave them at such great cost to himself. As a result, Muslim judgment began freezing and continued to freeze till it has almost reached zero point. The crown in preference to independent judgment cost 'Uthmân his head and Muslims their intellect and empire.

After 13 long centuries there is being ushered in a Renaissance among the Muslims and the cry is "Back

to the Qurán and the Prophet". Old gods that enthralled Muslim intellect are being thrown off their pedestals of blind-folded obedience; their dicta are being examined and judged under the searchlight of re-found Reason. May this movement progress and prosper—but how long it has taken to come, and come it has through what vistas and avenues. The world-wide empire of Islam has dwindled to a mere shadow of what it was. 'Alí renounced a crown and 'Uthmán lost a head, but what kingdoms crowns and coronets it has cost Muslims to awake to the lesson that 'Alí taught; what terrible price Muslims have paid and with what heart-rending agonies. Even this price will not be too heavy if Islam can regain its judgment. 'Alí taught that independent judgment and unfettered intellect was far more valuable than earthly rule.

'Alí preferred his unfettered intellect and was indifferent as to who wore the crown of restricted judgment if only the wearer of the crown did not restrict, too, and interfere with, the freedom of the sons of Islam or tamper with the fundamentals of the Faith. "I will acquiesce" said he, "so long as affairs of Islam remain unharmed and tyranny and oppression do not become a public scandal, even though my personal rights should be subjected to injustice."^p

When his uncle 'Abbás told him, "Father of Hasan, they have fixed the Caliphate on 'Uthmán by playing a ^{A deliberate} fraud on you", 'Alí's great reply was, "No, I ^{act} knew it,^q therefore, they could not hoodwink me. I did not like to be the bone of contention among

(q) P. 9, Supra. [q] Ch. 58, P. 5.

Muslims; that would disturb national solidarity".^r This is 'Alī, the Prophet's 'brother in this world and the Hereafter',^s the great custodian of Islam.

[r] A'them Kūfi. [s] Ch. 15. P. 3.

CHAPTER LX

EXPLAINS THE SCHEME OF SUCCESSION

The object and intention of 'Umer's oligarchical committee—its constitution calculated to keep 'Alí out of the office—significance of the provision of death to the minority-party—'Alí's demands on the would-be arbitrator—Arbitration a farce—the supporters of 'Alí and 'Uthmán compared—the holy Companions want 'Alí in office for the integrity of Islam—the Ummeyyádes want 'Uthmán for the tribal interests of the Qureish—an echo of Theqifeh—'Alí's attitude towards the previous Caliphates clarified.

1. 'Umer, like abú Biker, had always held strong views against Hášhimites' Caliphate. When Abú Biker was asking the Theqifeh gathering to accept the Muhájir Caliphate lest Arabia should place it in the Prophet's family,^t 'Umer found him echoing his own sentiments.^u He himself had twice propounded to the scholarly Ibn 'Abbás that the *Nation* did not like the Apostolate and the Caliphate in the same family, although 'Abbás, on both the occasions, had doubted the soundness of the dictum.^v Abú Biker had, to the exclusion of 'Alí, willed away the office to 'Umer who, in turn, would have passed it on to the third Theqifeh confederate^w had Abú 'Obeideh been living.^x Throughout the two reigns the Hášhimites were snubbed interneers,^y not allowed to see the world or be seen by it^z and throughout the Caliphates voices, low, muffled voices were persistently heard connecting Alí's name with the office.^a

Abú Biker had got the Caliphate, at Theqifeh, be-

(t) Ch. 36 P. 5 (u) Ch. 36 P. 4 (v) Ch. 57 PP. 2-3

(w) Ch. 36 PP. 1, 4, 5 (x) Ch. 58 P. 1

(y) Ch. 56 P. 7 (z) *ibid* (a) Ch. 57 P. 3

hind 'Alī's back and had nominated 'Umer behind the walls of his palace. The Ansār chief, Bashīr bin Sa'd, was dead but not his voice which said that people had accepted Abū Biker in the absence of 'Alī and that in his presence hardly a couple of the Theqifeh members could have gone to 'Alī's rival, Abū Biker.^b The talk that the Caliphate had been kept away from the Hāshimites because of injustice, jealousy and mutiny had never ceased.^c It was but natural that 'Umer should try to silence the voice of discontent and falsify 'Alī's protagonists, as well as demonstrate the truth of his theory of the people disliking the combination of the Apostolate and the Caliphate in the same family.

2. For this purpose, he discarded Abū Biker's method of nomination and constituted a selection-board. 'Alī was thus given an ostensible opportunity of vindicating his rights in equal competition. His failure would argue against the probability of his success at Theqifeh and also against his ability to secure popular support after Abū Biker. This would wash away the objection against Abū Biker's "election" at the exclusive Theqifeh gathering as well as 'Umer's nomination. Abū Biker's individual act was now replaced by the cumulative will of a Board. But the Board's constitution was so defective as to lead the Hāshimites to accurately guess its end as well as intention—"The Caliphate is off from us" (the Hāshimites) and "Umer does not give us the Caliphate".^d

3. It will be recalled that, at the demise of the Prophet, the Benī Zohreh were congregated with Sa'd and

(b) Ch. 40 P. 6. (c) Ch. 57 P. 3. Ch. 39 PP. 3-4.

Ch. 42 P. 2. Ch. 44 PP. 3-5. Ch. 57 PP. 2-3. Ch. 59 P. 8.

(d) Ch. 58 P. 5.

Reshuffled
politics.

'Abdur Rehmán, the Ummeyyades were in conference at the house of 'Uthmán.^e The Ummeyyades were proposing Abú Biker's violent overthrow.^f Since then 'Uthmán was the Secretary of State to the Caliphate^g and had given his daughter in marriage to 'Umer's son 'Abdulleh. Abú Sufiyán's sons, having been the recipients of military commands and proconsulates, had gained in power and prestige.^h The Beni Zohreh had, by marriage, become affiliated with the Ummeyyades. As Umer's family had "had enough in 'Umer and needed no more",ⁱ and as Abú 'Obeideh bin Jerrah was not alive to be the Caliph^j and as a Háshimite Caliphate was, according to 'Umer, impolitic^k and as 'Uthmán, by accepting office in the Caliphs' secretariate,^l had been instrumental in weaning the Ummeyyades from rowdyism, no wonder that the Caliph arranged to bestow on 'Uthmán the Caliphate that the Ummeyyades had once wanted to snatch away from his predecessor.^m 'Uthmán, Sa'd and 'Abdur Rehmán were on the Board to vote together.ⁿ 'Abdulleh, 'Umer's son ('Uthmán's son-in-law) was the umpire to vote with 'Abdur Rehmán which was synonymous with entrusting the latter with the casting vote.^o 'Ali found himself opposed by a solid oligarchy of kinsmen and friends. He found that the oligarchy was not merely in possession of three family votes-enough to create a tie-but also of the casting vote.

4. Nay more. The oligarchical majority was also put in possession of a sinister power of beheading the

(e) Ch. 34 P. 1 (f) *ibid*, Ch. 37 P. 4

(g) Ch. 39 P. 1, Ch. 50 P. 1 (h) Ch. 39 P. 2

(i) Ch. 58 P. 3 (j) Ch. 58 P. 2 (k) Ch. 57 PP. 2-3

(l) Ch. 39 P. 1, Ch. 50 P. 1 (m) Ch. 34 P. 1, Ch. 37 P. 4

(n) Ch. 58 P. 5 (o) Ch. 58 P. 4

The scheme dissentient minority.^p The power was given in general terms. The three family votes, strengthened with a secure casting vote, reduced the opposition to a manifest minority. Members of the Board who did not belong to the family-group had, therefore, to vote with Democle's sword dangling over their heads. Was it to intimidate the possible 'opposition' into voting with the family oligarchy and leave 'Ali in absolute isolation? Even if all the members, outside the oligarchy, braved death—and Telheh, the affectionate husband, loved life's pleasures too well to part company with his wife and his head for the mere matter of a vote on one side or the other, while Zubeir was too vacillating^q to stick to a particular side—and voted for 'Ali, it would be of no avail. Giving 'Ali what was, ostensibly a fair chance but placing him in a hopeless minority overhung with a Democle's sword and setting his face against the stone-wall of an interested oligarchy was a scheme ingenious enough to keep 'Ali away from the Caliphate, advertise his isolation and also to drive him and his voters to death's door.

5. The indelicate insistence on being the arbitrator in spite of 'Ali's silent reluctance, the thick-skinned readiness to accept 'Ali's intriguing demands^r implying—in the light of 'Ali's knowledge of the purpose and intention of the Board—serious reflections on his impartiality, constitute the Pharaoh's pharisaic^t promises regarding "justice, breezy ambition, kinship, partisan-spirit, self-seeking policy, "previous advice and fear of reproaches", a ludicrous dramatic irony. 'Ali had

(p) *ibid* (q) Ch. 58 P. 4 n [m] (r) Ch. 59 P. 2

(s) Ch. 58 P. 5 (t) Ch. 59 PP. 2, 6, 8, 9

come without the least hope of getting the Caliphate and had come in spite of 'Abbás's opinion to the contrary.^u He had come merely to avoid disturbing the national solidarity.^v But when the Pharaoh tried to hoodwink the public by reproducing the Theqifeh incidents of Abú Biker proposing for 'Umer and Abú 'Obeideh and the latter two surrendering it to Abú Biker, it became necessary to expose the Pharaoh's sanctimonious withdrawal from the contest.^w The exposure, beautifully worded as it was, made the hideousness of the intrigue more hideous. 'Kinship' with a solid oligarchy proclaimed him a "partisan" prone to place the Caliphate amongst his own kinsmen, on account of "self-seeking policy", and having thus given a good turn to the affairs of his kinsmen, to expect from them a reward fat enough to satisfy his "brezzy ambition". The still, small voice of conscience speaking for the noble-minded 'Ali^x was most likely to be hushed down by the fear of loud "reproaches" of kinsmen, kinswomen and their children at his preferring a stranger to kinsman 'Uthmán.

6. But what and whose was the "advice" that 'Ali referred to, in his reply to 'Abdur Rehmán? ^y History is silent on the point. May be, the historians

A guess have omitted to mention the name and nature of the adviser and the advice. May be, 'Ali spoke elliptically because his audience could catch the complete sense of his words. But can it not be guessed? 'Umer was of opinion that a Hashimite Caliphate was not desirable.^z He had instructed the umpire, his son, 'Abdulleh, who was 'Uthmán's son-in-law, to vote with 'Abdur

(u) Ch. 58 P. 6 (v) *ibid* (w) Ch. 59 P. 2

(x) Ch. 59 P. 5 (y) Ch. 59 P. 2 (z) Ch. 57 PP. 2-3

Rehmán.^a 'Abdur Rehmán belonged to a solid party of 'kinsmen.'^b Would it be too much for the Caliph to have 'advised' 'Abdur Rehmán to grasp the significance of the numerical strength of a particular group, further augmented as that strength was by the possession of the casting vote.^c

7. The Pharaoh's quixotic sacrifice of his claims ill-concealed the patent fact and latent idea. It ill-fitted in his mouth to ask to be the arbitrator in the
 The Pharaoh face of 'Ali's silence of reluctance. Delicacy of feelings should have suggested it to him that he did not command 'Ali's confidence. With a peculiar lack of finer feelings, super-abundance of greed of gaining his end, he repeated his request and specifically invited 'Ali to repose his confidence in him. 'Ali's reply was a burning accusation of his integrity and impartiality which became more cloudy when 'Uthmán hastened to be "the first" to consent to the arbitration.

Donning on the donned off dress of the Prophet, the Pharaoh sat sanctimonious on the Prophet's pulpit inviting public opinion in a matter which was, in view of Telheh's withdrawl in 'Uthmán's favour and Sa'd's entrusting his vote to the Pharaoh,^d already a fore-gone conclusion so far as the Board's or the Pharaoh's

(a) Ch. 58 P. 4 (b) Ch 58 P. 5

(c) The idea of not bringing the question to actual voting and to decide it by arbitration, in order to avoid the ugliness of all the kinsmen voting on one side and utilising the casting vote for a family purpose, seems to have been an after-thought and improvement on the original idea of the Caliph. Veiled strategem has always been a peculiarity of the Umeyyades. (d) Ch. 59, P. 2

mind was concerned. The Pharaoh had already made up his mind ^a and yet he went through the farce of taking 'Ali aside, flattering him, in private, and offering him, in public, impossible conditions to accept, which he knew to be entirely unacceptable to him. 'Abdur Rehman over-acted himself here and gave out the whole game.

8. But what requires special notice is the personalities that are reported to have offered their ideas to 'Abdur Rehman for arriving at a decision and their
 Schmers respective points of view. 'Ammar bin Yasir, "one of the primitive Muslims of whom Mahomet himself had said that he was filled with faith from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot"^g and Miqdad bin Aswed, another holy Companion, spoke ^h for 'Ali. Two of his kinsmen spoke for 'Uthman, one of them was the notorious forger and counterfeiter who had been banished by the Prophet for the sacrilegious crime of trying, as a scribe, to interpolate in the Qur'an so as to denaturalise the meaning of the Revelation;ⁱ the other was one whose very presence in a Muslim assemblage was an outrageous presumption.^j

9. The points of view of each group of the speakers are also noteworthy. 'Ammar's suggestion was to avoid
 tribalism disunity among Muslims.^k The other group
 again wanted their man under the threat of a disruption on the part of the Qureish.^l Hear again the echo of the Theqifeh warning that should the Ansars not consent to the speaker's proposal and leave Arabia free to place the Caliphate in the Prophet's family, there

(c) Ch. 59. P. 4 (f) Ch 59. P. 5

(g) The Life of Mahomet, by W. Irving (h) Ch. 59. P. 4

(i) Ch. 59. P. 4 n (y) (j) Ch. 59 P. 4. (k) *ibid* (l) *ibid*

would be *some body* prepared to "upset affairs both spiritual and secular."^m Querry. Who would be ready to upset the affairs of Islam if not silenced by the morsel of the Caliphate? 'Ali never attempted the upstting; 'Ali always tried to set the affairs right. Ready to upset the affairs, if not given the Caliphate, was it not 'Ali's rival?

The arbitration throws a flood of light on another moot-question. Ali's policy differed from the two Caliphs to an extent that would not let him follow them even for getting the crown of the greatest empire of the day.